

Turkey: Iraqi missiles out of 'no-fly' zone

ANKARA (R) — Iraq has pulled all missiles out of the southern and northern no-fly zones as a gesture to the new U.S. administration, Turkey's Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin has said. Mr. Cetin, in remarks issued by Anadolu news agency, said Saturday night that Iraq had also withdrawn troops from the north and closed all radars there. "Now it has gone to a normal period," Mr. Cetin said in the remarks quoted by Anadolu. "By this attitude, Iraq wants to give a message to the new U.S. administration." He did not give further details of the Iraqi military deployment in his comments to the Institute of Turkish Administrators in Ankara. The presence of Iraqi anti-aircraft missiles in the allied-patrolled no-fly zones prompted U.S. President George Bush to order air raids against Iraqi installations in their waning days of his administration. The United States announced earlier this month that Iraq appeared to have changed its behaviour in the two "no-fly" zones. A Defence Department spokesman said that Iraq had not used targeting radars or fired on U.S. and allied planes since Jan. 23.

Christopher to start tour in Egypt

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will begin his Middle East tour on Thursday on the Egyptian coast. The tour is part of his scheduled Arab-Israeli peace mission and to resolve the crisis over Palestinian expellees. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mousa said today Mr. Christopher would meet President Hosni Mubarak before leaving Cairo Friday. Mr. Christopher is also due to visit Jordan, Israel and Saudi Arabia. It was unclear whether he will go to Lebanon.

Israeli Arabs decide against accepting Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Arab mayors said Sunday they were rejecting an offer to shelter Palestinian Muslim refugees. The government said it planned to bring them anyway. In announcing Wednesday that it would give the Muslims shelter, the government said it was responding to a request from a group of Arab mayors who had asked for help. But the mayors rejected Sunday that Israel took action without consulting the Palestinian authorities. "We are not prepared to take in anyone," said Naim Hussein, mayor of Ramat Gan, said after chairing a meeting of a committee of Israeli-Arab mayors. Another committee spokesman, Ahmad Tidi, said Israel of trying to use its Arab citizens "for a public relations stunt."

Khamenei: Rushdie death order stays

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Sunday the four-year-old death edict against Salman Rushdie for alleged blasphemy was irrevocable and called on Muslims to kill him. A late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ordered Mr. Rushdie's execution on Feb. 14, 1989 for alleged insults to Islam in his novel "The Satanic Verses." Ayatollah Khamenei said, "the law on the apostate Salman Rushdie must be implemented without a doubt, and it shall be implemented. It is the duty of all Muslims who can reach this country to write today to remove this harmful being from the face of the earth." (See related story on page 2).

S. tourist found murdered in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Police Sunday closed the American tourist in E. Arias was strangled to death last week and her body was found in the desert near the port of Suez, a police official said. An official said investigators believe the motive of the murder was theft and are searching for the killer. Mrs. Arias, from Miami, Florida, was found dead last week in the desert between Suez and Ismailia, 130 kilometers from the capital. She had nothing on her except her clothes.

Itani to quit Somalia job

OGADISHU (R) — Ismat Kitani, special envoy of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to Somalia, will leave his job for other U.N. assignment at the end of the month, a spokesman said Sunday. U.N. spokesman Mawlawi said Mr. Kitani is being recalled to the U.N. headquarters in New York at the end of his three-month contract to serve in the Horn of Africa. "There is no truth that he has resigned," Mr. Mawlawi said, suggesting Mr. Kitani, 41, was leaving the job prematurely.

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Israel takes back expellee after 22 years

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (R) — Israel allowed a Palestinian it expelled 22 years ago to return home to the Israeli-occupied West Bank Sunday. Majed Salameh, 55, who won the right to return after a seven-year court battle, was the first Arab the Israelis have taken back after such a long exile, his lawyer said. In an emotional reunion, Mr. Salameh tearfully embraced his son, who was five years old when Mr. Salameh was expelled in 1970 on suspicion of membership in Fatah. After crossing the bridge from Jordan into the West Bank, Mr. Salameh said: "May all the other (exiles) come home too." Mr. Salameh, who was misnamed by his lawyer last week as Majed Zakarne, was to have returned last Friday, but was turned away by troops who had apparently not been told of the change in his status.

Saddam urges dialogue with Clinton, stresses need for wise approach

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — President Saddam Hussein told a U.S. visitor that he wants to open a dialogue with President Bill Clinton and a "new relationship" with Washington, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported Sunday. "I believe that the president of the biggest country in the world... needs to try wisdom, and not weapons," INA quoted President Saddam as saying late Saturday in a meeting with Ramsey Clark, a peace activist and former U.S. attorney general.

"Is he ready to listen to the viewpoint of Iraq?" President Saddam was quoted as saying. "If he is ready, I simply believe that we can pave the way for building new relations based on mutual respect... regardless of what had happened," INA quoted President Saddam as saying. It was the first time that President Saddam himself has asked for a dialogue with Mr. Clinton, who took office Jan. 20. Previous overtures have come from government officials and the state-run media.

President Saddam also praised Mr. Clinton's opposition to the Vietnam war.

"There are some trying to portray the anti-war past of Clinton as a matter of personal weakness, while we consider such a stand a mark of strength," President Saddam said.

He made the comments in what was described as "a thorough and comprehensive political dialogue" with Mr. Clark, a vocal opponent of the 1991 Gulf war. A transcript of their 70-minute dialogue was read on state radio and television and published in full in Iraqi newspapers.

It was the first public mention of Mr. Clinton by the Iraqi leader since he announced a unilateral ceasefire, after U.S.-led air and missile attacks on Iraq, in an inauguration-eve offering to the new American leader. "We and all of humanity consider this (anti-war) aspects of Clinton's personality to be a mark of strength," President Saddam said.

"The problem is whether the information and advice given to him would keep him on this path... or he would take another after becoming president."

"In short, is he going to use wisdom or weaponry?" Iraqi media and officials have

avoided criticising Mr. Clinton, despite what are seen as tough statements regarding President Saddam and Iraq's post-Gulf war behaviour.

Pledges by Mr. Clinton to pursue the Bush administration's Iraq policy and to never normalise relations with Baghdad while President Saddam remained in power have largely been ignored. President Saddam urged Mr. Clinton not to be deceived by pressure exerted on him by some State Department officials who retained their jobs when George Bush left office on Jan. 20. "The problem now is whether President Clinton would, in the face of pressures exerted by some, take the same misguided path as did Bush."

As part of his attempt at rapprochement with Washington, President Saddam ordered his air defences to stop challenging U.S. and allied planes in the air-exclusion zones set up by the allies to protect Kurds in northern Iraq and Shiites in the south. President Saddam asked Mr. Clinton to forget the past and start afresh.

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His Majesty King Hussein Sunday meets with the 20 members of a committee entrusted with supervising the establishment of a centre in

Amman on human rights and democracy in the Arab World (Photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Amman centre on Arab human rights and democracy should serve as beacon — King

His Majesty meets with committee of proposed institution

AMMAN (J.T.) — A centre for freedom, democracy and human rights studies in the Arab World should act as "a beacon to dispel darkness prevailing the Arab scene," His Majesty King Hussein told the centre's founding committee Sunday.

"The centre's aim is to enhance the Jordanian democratic experience and to liberate (Jordan's) intellectual and creative capabilities," the King told the 20 founding members of the committee that was formed last week to oversee the birth of the pan-Arab institution.

The committee includes senators, deputies, and political and

human rights activists. The King had called for the establishment of the centre late last year. The government took the initiative by naming the members of the committee early this month.

A member of the committee told the Jordan Times, however, that the centre will be an independent entity and that its board of trustees will be pan-Arab.

The King, since the introduction of the current phase of democracy, has called on Jordanians to turn Jordan into a model for the Arab World in terms of democracy and human rights.

In his speech Sunday, King Hussein envisioned a future for

the Arab Nation "in order for poets to express themselves freely, in a secure environment unmarked by oppression or individual tyranny—an environment in which children can sleep in peace and comfort, without being terrorised by fear, subjugation or a sense of siege."

"We must stand up to illiteracy, hunger, disease, fear, tyranny, plunder, alienation, religious and secular extremism and any other form of assault on man's freedom right or dignity," the King said.

Following are major excerpts from the King's address: "As we see it, the centre's aim

is to enhance the Jordanian democratic experience and to liberate our intellectual and creative capabilities towards the goal of establishing a comprehensive paradigm for political, social and cultural democracy. The centre will thus crystallise the vision for a future phase from which will emanate an overall Arab movement rekindling the Arab renaissance that has always been the message of the Great Arab Revolt. Within this immutable message we have found succor and inspiration during these lean years in our nation's history, as

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Abu Jaber reports success of Damascus discussions

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber Sunday voiced full satisfaction with the outcome of the talks he held Saturday in Damascus.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Abu Jaber said he conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and listened to an evaluation of the situation in the region by the Syrian leader.

Dr. Abu Jaber said he consulted with Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharas on issues of mutual interest, including the Palestinian expellees issue, the Middle East peace process and the Arab situation. The Syrian officials voiced interest in pursuing and intensifying consultation and coordination with Jordan with a view to enhancing common Arab work, he said, adding that he felt a genuine willingness to further strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

Dr. Abu Jaber said the Joint Jordanian-Syrian Higher Committee will meet in the near future in Amman to pursue cooperation between both countries. In Damascus on Saturday, Dr. Abu Jaber said a five-point U.N. Security Council formula aimed at solving the crisis over 396 Palestinian expellees was not enough and called for the return of all those expelled.

Dr. Abu Jaber did not say whether the return of all the expellees was a precondition demanded by Arabs to resume 15-month-old Arab-Israeli peace talks, stalled after Israel's December 17 expulsion of 415 Palestinians.

The U.N. formula reaffirmed Resolution 799 calling for the return of all evictees, but said Israel's offer to allow 101 of the remaining 396 evictees to return at once and the rest by the end of the year was a step in the right direction.

Dr. Abu Jaber said of the formula: "What was issued by the Security Council was only a statement. Resolution 799 was stronger and we call for implementation of this resolution."

Dr. Abu Jaber said his talks with President Assad, Mr. Khaddam and Mr. Sharas were "extremely good and fruitful."

He said before departing for home: "We still have some time and this gives us a chance to

Israelis kill Arab youth near Nablus

NABLUS, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers shot dead an Arab boy Sunday during a clash between students and troops at a village high school in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian sources said.

They said Amjad Emsbaki, 18, was killed by troops in clashes that broke out after five army vehicles surrounded the school, five kilometres from the town of Nablus. Two students were wounded, they said.

Israelis have killed at least 1,016 Palestinians since the outbreak of the intifada in December 1987.

Human rights groups have voiced concern over a marked rise in the number of Arab deaths since Israel's December expulsion of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon.

Israeli army regulations forbid shooting to kill in demonstrations unless soldiers' lives are directly threatened.

On the Golan Heights Sunday most Arab businesses closed and

pupils boycotted classes in protest against Israel's 1981 "annexation" of the strategic plateau, police sources said.

Israeli troops and police prevented demonstrations in Golan mountain villages, home to some 18,000 Druze. But about 80 per cent of stores closed, the sources said.

Unrest has diminished in recent years as dozens of Golan Druze, including students, have been allowed to travel to Syria. Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Mousa said Saturday that Israel's oppressive measures in the occupied territories add more complications to the situation resulting from the Jewish state's mass expulsion of Palestinians.

He described the measures as unhelpful in creating a proper climate for pushing forward the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Mousa made the remarks during a meeting in Cairo with a group of U.S. senators.

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Rabin says Palestinians will resume peace talks

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Sunday he believed Palestinians will resume peace talks despite their row over 400 Palestinians expelled to Lebanon.

"I believe that the parties that are interested in peace will come to the peace negotiations, and I believe that the Palestinians will do the same," he told Israel Radio.

Palestinian peace team members said at the weekend they would shun the 16-month-old peace negotiations with Israel — due to resume in March or April — until all the expellees returned home.

There are now just under 400 Palestinians remaining in a tent camp in southern Lebanon.

The peace negotiators remained firm despite a U.N. Security Council bid to defuse the dispute. The Security Council on Friday welcomed a U.S.-brokered compromise for Israel to repatriate 101 evictees now and the rest by year's end.

The evictees — all from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip — rejected the compromise, demanding they all be taken back immediately from their camp between Israeli and Lebanese army lines.

Leading Palestinian spokesman Hanan Ashrawi said the Security Council formula failed to address "the central issue of the illegality of the deportations."

Ziad Ahy Zayyad, adviser to the Palestinian peace team, implored Israeli leaders to improve the atmosphere, telling Israeli army radio: "Do something positive in order to ensure the resumption of the negotiations."

He accused Israel of raising obstacles, citing its blowing up of Palestinians' houses, leaving families homeless, in a campaign to root out activists in the Gaza Strip.

Saeb Erakat, a member of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, said that the endorsement was "tailoring a resolution to fit Rabin's side, and unfortunately, without the immediate return of all the deportees, the Palestinians will not be able to continue the peace talks."

A political source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Israel was "pleased that the threat of condemnation or sanctions is behind us and that we can now concentrate on the important issue, namely the peace talks."

Israel's offer to immediately repatriate 101 of the evictees and return the rest within a year was worked out with the U.S. administration that Mr. Rabin said had promised to shield Israel from any U.N. ultimatums or sanctions.

'Syrian stand'

A U.S. senator who recently

House denounces U.N. deal on exiles

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday issued a statement denouncing the U.S.-Israeli compromise deal over U.N. Security Council Resolution 799.

The statement referred to a recent decision by the United States to support Israel's plans to repatriate only 100 of the nearly 400 expellees with the rest of the expellees to be repatriated in degrees over a year from now. Describing the move as a dangerous precedent, the House demanded that the Security Council adopt a clear-cut position vis-à-vis the question of the expellees and follow up implementation of Resolution 799 in full.

"It is rather strange to see the council refraining from debating the U.N. secretary-general's report demanding that the council implement the resolution," the statement said.

"The United Nations is disregarding its own resolutions and exposing the credibility of international legitimacy to danger by issuing a declaration which in effect prevents the implementation of Resolution 799 that has been overwhelmingly approved and passed in response to (Israel's) flagrant violations of human rights," said the statement.

"We always believed that the United Nations continues to be subjected to hegemony and going against Arab interests but the latest Security Council attitude far exceeded this belief and went beyond all logic," it said.

The statement demanded that the council put an end to Israel's atrocities against Palestinians and help the Palestinians regain freedom.

It also demanded that the council find a way to provide international protection to the Palestinian people.

Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, speaking after talks with Syrian leaders in Damascus, called for the return of all the expelled Palestinians.

Foreign minister under criticism in House over detainees in Egyptian jails

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Maftaq Deputy Abdul Karim Al Dughmi Monday called for resignation of Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber for "his failure to fulfill his duty" and take appropriate measures to secure the release of over 70 Jordanian citizens the deputy said are jailed in Egypt.

During a session of the Lower House Sunday, Mr. Dughmi called on fellow parliamentarians to withhold confidence from the foreign minister after strongly attacking the Egyptian government for allegedly detaining Jordanian citizens upon arrival in Egypt. He accused Dr. Abu Jaber of "neglecting his duty."

Mr. Dughmi had earlier submitted a written request to Dr. Abu Jaber to detail the measures the Foreign Ministry had taken to free Jordanian citizens reportedly detained in Egypt. He also listed the names of 10 Jordanians he said were being tortured in Egyptian jails.

The Muslim Brotherhood bloc at the House has provided the ministry with 77 citizens it says are jailed in Egypt.

In his written reply to Mr. Dughmi, Dr. Abu Jaber said the government had not received any official or documented information from the Egyptian government on the number of Jordanian citizens detained or details of charges levelled against them.

Dr. Abu Jaber said the government had information based on letters leaked by detained Jordanians to their families, newspaper reports and communications from human rights organisations.

In addition to launching "official and personal" diplomatic efforts to collect information on the case, Dr. Abu Jaber said the Jordanian embassy in Cairo also contacted the Egyptian authorities to verify unofficial information about the detention of Jordanian citizens but received no response.

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In addition to launching "official and personal" diplomatic efforts to collect information on the case, Dr. Abu Jaber said the Jordanian embassy in Cairo also contacted the Egyptian authorities to verify unofficial information about the detention of Jordanian citizens but received no response.

"The embassy also directly contacted (concerned Egyptian authorities) at all levels but only received promises that have not been implemented," Dr. Abu Jaber said.

"Non-Jordanian groups are contacting the Egyptian authorities for information on a number of detainees holding Jordanian passports," said Dr. Abu Jaber, confirming that Jordanian citizens are detained in Egypt.

"This is a point against you and not for you," Mr. Dughmi said in a speech addressed to Dr. Abu Jaber, who did not attend the House session.

"Your failure to treat this situation led to the intervention of non-Jordanian groups in the case," Mr. Dughmi said.

During the House's session Sunday, Minister of Social Development Amin Mashqbeh also came under fire from Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Abdul Rahim Ekour for not providing

information on a number of detainees holding Jordanian passports, said Dr. Abu Jaber, confirming that Jordanian citizens are detained in Egypt.

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Exiles urge Arab states to reject U.N. formula

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (R) — Palestinian expellees urged Arab states Sunday to reject a U.N. bid to defuse the crisis over them before the U.S. secretary of state visits the Middle East.

The Palestinians expelled by Israel and stranded for eight weeks in South Lebanon said it was up to Arab participants to decide whether to return to peace talks with Israel.

But the 396 expellees vowed never to budge on their demand that Israel should be forced to allow all of them to return immediately in line with U.N. Security Council Resolution 799.

"We urge Arab League foreign ministers to meet and stand against the Zionist-American conspiracy which found a welcome in the Security Council," evictee leader Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi told reporters.

"They should take a united stand especially before (U.S. Secretary of State Warren) Christopher visits and we beg them to support our demand so

that our return home can be fulfilled."

The evictees on Sunday distributed warm clothing smuggled to their muddy tent camp between Israeli and Lebanese lines.

Journalists saw them using a Lebanese cellular telephone apparently donated by sympathisers to call internationally.

Diplomats said it was highly unlikely Arab League foreign ministers would be able to meet as sought by the Palestinians before Mr. Christopher starts his Middle East tour on Wednesday.

The U.N. Security Council said Friday an Israeli offer to take back 101 of the evictees and allow the rest to return to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip within a year was a step in the right direction towards ending the crisis.

The council declaration was part of a five-point formula which also reaffirmed Resolution 799 and urged Israel swiftly to

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Militants attack Algerian schoolbus; one dead

ALGIERS (R) — Armed Muslim fundamentalists on Sunday attacked a schoolbus carrying children of members of the Algerian security forces, the paramilitary gendarmerie said.

The bus driver, shot in the attack, later died of his wounds, but the gendarmerie statement quoted by the official news agency APS made no mention of any children being hurt.

The incident was the first to involve young children of parents in the security forces.

In a weekend of violence, Defence Minister Khaled Nezzar, seen as the strongman in Algeria's collective presidency, narrowly escaped assassination in a car bomb attack on Saturday in Algiers.

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Most American soldiers to leave Somalia by April

MOGADISHU (AP) — Most of the American troops in Somalia could be home in April under a plan being prepared by the United Nations, a U.S. military spokesman said Saturday.

As part of the plan, U.S. command of the multinational force in Somalia would be turned over to the United Nations.

President Bill Clinton said he was encouraged by the reported timetable and would "do some work" on the issue Monday.

"This does need to go from a U.S. mission to a U.N. mission," Mr. Clinton said during a White House photo session.

"Even though I think President (George) Bush hoped we could, I never thought we could do it by the end of January."

Military officials have expressed increasing confidence that the nearly three month-old Operation Restore Hope can be handed over to U.N. forces. The U.S.-led operation has quelled much of the clan violence that had kept relief aid from millions of people throughout the famine-racked country.

Farouk Mawlawi, the U.N. spokesman in Somalia, said the U.S. handover "will take weeks."

The Security Council is to consider the command shift at a meeting next week. If it is approved, then the U.S. military plans to send home most of the nearly 19,000 troops remaining before May.

"Looking at our timeline, that's perhaps technically feasible by mid-to late April," said Colonel Fred Peck, spokesman for the U.S. forces.

The plan, as reported by the New York Times Saturday, calls for the U.S. troops to be replaced by 15,000 to 20,000 soldiers from various countries. They would include 3,000 to 5,000 Americans, the newspaper said, quoting diplomatic and Pentagon sources.

The international force would be under the command of a Turkish general, the newspaper said. Somalia and other Arabs have said they want a Muslim to oversee the relief effort. Turkey is both Islamic and an ally of the United States.

The Security Council is ex-

pected to act quickly on a resolution to transfer command of the international force, the paper said.

The international force meanwhile, continued to face gunfire and seize weapons. Shoot-outs with Somalis left two Somalis wounded, and Italian troops sweeping through a Mogadishu neighbourhood uncovered arms including more than 100 grenades, 12,000 detonators and four missiles.

A U.S. marine helicopter crashed on an airfield in Baledogle, injuring the four crewmen aboard, officials said.

The CH-53D Sea Stallion, of Marine Helicopter Squadron 363, was on a routine training flight when it crashed Saturday night in Baledogle, 100 kilometres north-west of Mogadishu.

Damage to the aircraft and the cause of the accident were under investigation, a U.S. military statement said. No one was hurt on the ground.

Italian forces at dawn raided a neighbourhood in northeast Mogadishu, finding weapons under bags of rice, blankets and furniture in homes and shops, said army Captain Ed Loomis, another U.S. military spokesman.

The stashes included 25 rifles, 22 heavy weapons, 103 hand grenades, 12,000 electronic detonators, 26 artillery and mortar shells, two TOW missiles and two Milan missiles, and four rocket-propelled grenades, he said.

No one was arrested or injured in the sweep, and some people even volunteered to hand over weapons, he said.

A Marine observation team on a routine check wound a Somali after coming under fire Friday near a stadium in an area. A Marine was killed in January. Capt. Loomis said, and Tunisian troops shot and wounded a Somali in the leg after he and four other Somalis tried to enter a supply compound, presumably to steal.

Of the crashed helicopter crew, the pilot and one crewman were flown to a U.S. army hospital at the Mogadishu airport for treatment and observation, the statement said. The two others were treated and released.

Shelling duels erupt near Lebanon evictees' camp

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Shelling duels erupted early Sunday in southern Lebanon, four days before U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher tours the Middle East to revive peace talks.

Several artillery rounds fired from Israel's self-styled "security zone" in southern Lebanon crashed before dawn on suspected resistance strongholds at Dahir mountain, which overlooks the camp of nearly 400 Palestinians expelled by Israel, police reported.

Neither side reported casualties Sunday. A militiaman from Israel's allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) was killed and nine others wounded Saturday when the guerrillas launched the attack with a mortar barrage on a forward SLA post.

The exchanges flared from dusk Saturday to daybreak Sunday, pitting Israeli and SLA militia gunners against Hizbollah.

Police said that the Israelis and allies pounded eight villages with rounds from tanks and Howitzers. Parachute flares lit up the area the Litani River basin 25 kilometres east to Dahir mountain.

Guerrillas struck back with mortar barrages aimed at outlying SLA and Israeli positions. They fired three Soviet-made Katyusha rockets that exploded harmlessly west of Marjayoun, the main town of the "security zone," police said.

A Hizbollah communiqué said the attack was launched to commemorate former leader Sheikh Abbas Musawi, killed Feb. 16, 1992 when Israeli helicopters blasted his convoy in South Lebanon.

Dahir mountain lies about 1.6 kilometres from the rain-drenched tent city where about 400 Palestinians expelled by Israel have lived for nearly two months.

Hizbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah hit out at the U.N. Security Council for failing to force Israel to take back the expellees.

He was speaking at a rally at a Beirut Mosque to commemorate the killing of Sheikh Abbas. Sheikh Musawi's wife and child were also killed in the Israeli helicopter ambush.

"We stress in the memory of the martyrdom of Sheikh Abbas Musawi that the resistance as a military act of (holy war) will continue and escalate... at any cost," Sheikh Nasrallah said.

"We will never abide by any 'rules of the game,'" he told a cheering crowd of about 10,000. "The only rules are the preservation of the resistance and its people."

The Islamic Resistance, Hizbollah's military arm, has launched hundreds of attacks, including suicide bombings, against Israeli forces in South Lebanon in the past decade.

Pakistani mediator secures Afghan ceasefire agreement

KABUL (R) — A Pakistani peace mediator has won a ceasefire agreement from the Afghan government and its dissident guerrilla foe the Hezb-e-Islami after nearly a month of fighting in the capital, a spokesman said Sunday.

"Hezb-e-Islami and the government have both agreed to hold fire to facilitate our peace mission," said Khalid Khawaja, spokesman for retired Pakistani Lieutenant-General Hafid Gul.

The truce, agreed late Saturday, has no time limit and the peace brokers hope to negotiate a permanent ceasefire soon, Mr. Khawaja said.

The city was at its quietest since the battles between government forces and the Hezb-e-Islami of radical leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar erupted 27 days ago. Hundreds of people have been killed and more than 5,000 injured in the fighting.

No rocket or artillery fire was heard overnight or Sunday morning and residents took advantage of the lull to venture out to stock up on scarce provisions.

Food and fuel are in extremely short supply in the capital, and the United Nations says it has succeeded in supplying only one per cent of the capital's food needs.

A few bursts of machinegun fire erupted, but these were not unusual in a city patrolled by thousands of armed men from the various Mujahadeen parties that took power from the former communist government in Kabul last April.

"There have been a few violations but they were mistakes or by people who did not know about the ceasefire," Mr. Khawaja said.

Gen. Gul, who led Pakistani military intelligence throughout much of the 14-year Afghan war and directed the Mujahadeen parties in their fight, left Sunday for Mr. Hekmatyar's headquarters at Charsayab south of Kabul for more talks.

He met President Burhanuddin Rabbani Saturday.

Mr. Hekmatyar is fighting to unseat Mr. Rabbani, accusing him of rigging his election last December.

Mr. Khawaja refused to give details of Gen. Gul's talks with the two rival fundamentalist leaders, saying: "It is very, very sensitive work."

It was unclear if the two sides agreed to the ceasefire out of deference to Gen. Gul, credited with being the architect of the Mujahadeen victory over the former Soviet-backed government.

A previous ceasefire, negotiated last August by neutral Mujahadeen parties and a Pakistani government minister to end bloody battles between Mr. Rabbani and Mr. Hekmatyar, lasted for several weeks.

Government officials have said privately they were forced to agree to the truce, which they described as a mistake that enabled Mr. Hekmatyar to rearm and resupply.

The Shiite Hezb-e-Wahdat party, based in the western suburbs and recently aligned with Mr. Hekmatyar, was not included in this latest ceasefire, Mr. Khawaja said.

The government said Hezb-e-Wahdat sued for a ceasefire from midnight Friday after the government made substantial advances against its positions, but soon violated it.

Mr. Hekmatyar has refused to halt his assault unless Mr. Rabbani agrees to elections within a year and the formation of an interim government acceptable to all parties.

In an attempt to take power, Mr. Hekmatyar launched an attack on Kabul last August in which 2,500 people were killed and thousands injured. He has since attacked the city intermittently.

France wins \$3.5b tank deal from UAE

ABU DHABI (R) — France won a \$3.5 billion order from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for more than 390 battle tanks on Sunday against Tough competition from its Gulf war allies the United States and Britain.

The contract was announced shortly after the opening of the Gulf's largest defence show, IDEX 93, where more than 350 weapons manufacturers from 34 countries displayed their wares in what has developed into the world's most important arms market.

"The UAE will buy 436 French LeClerc tanks," UAE Defence spokesman Gamal Al Suweidi told reporters.

The LeClerc, made by France's state-owned Giat Industries, the U.S. Abrams M1A2 made by General Dynamics Corporation, and Vickers Defence Systems Ltd's Challenger 2 were all competing for the deal.

"It was a difficult decision choosing between three superior tanks," Mr. Suweidi said. He did not give the value of the deal but defence experts said it was worth at least \$3.5 billion.

Mr. Suweidi said Giat had agreed to re-invest 60 per cent of the deal's value in joint-venture projects in the UAE.

General Dynamics was strong enough to string off losing the contract but Vickers may be forced to shut one of two factories in Britain for lack of sufficient export orders, the experts said.

Giat officials said that at the UAE's request their tanks would be powered by a German-made engine, the 12-cylinder MTU 883, which was on display at the first International Defence Exhibition IDE across the aisle from the LeClerc tank.

The 1,630-horsepower engine, made by the Deutsche Aerospace (DASA) unit of Daimler-Benz A.G., has been installed in 20,000 different battle tanks in the world, officials said.

Mr. Suweidi said he could not put a price tag on the deal "because of logistics and training," but added that it called for "an accelerated delivery... as soon as possible."

It was Giat's first export order for the LeClerc, developed in the late 1980s and previously sold only to the French army.

The Challenger and the original version of the Abrams tanks had both been battle-tested during the 1991 Gulf war.

Vickers last year lost a \$45 billion order to sell 250 tanks to Kuwait to General Dynamics M1A2. The experts said a \$300 million deal with Oman in January would prove insufficient to keep embattled Vickers out of trouble.

"The UAE's decision is very highly political," a disappointed British defence expert said.

General Dynamics officials said losing the UAE deal will have no serious effect on their company.

Britain and the United States remain the region's main arms suppliers but France, eager to penetrate the lucrative Gulf market, has close military ties with the UAE.

It sold the oil-rich UAE Mirage 2000 warplanes equipped with U.S. armament and air defence systems in the mid-1980s and defence experts say the two sides might soon enter fresh negotiations for more Mirage 2000s.

Rabbis throw spicy insults in election race

SEX, adultery, bribes and phonetaps are the extra spicy ingredients in the race for the head of what is — or was — the highest religious authority in the land: the Chief Rabbinate, the official spokesman of Judaism in Israel.

The two men to be chosen next week — one an Ashkenazi Jew, of Eastern European origin, and one a Sephardi or Oriental Jew — should provide moral guidance for the nation.

The most deadly, accusations have emerged in the campaign for the Ashkenazi chief rabbi. Early on Haifa's Ashkenazi chief Rabbi She'ar-Yashuv Cohen accused the front-runner, Yisrael Meir Lau, chief rabbi of Tel Aviv, of leaking and distorting statements he had made to the press in order to paint him as a dangerous liber-

al. Rabbi Lau's supporters then accused Rabbi Cohen's apparatus of bugging his office. Rabbi Cohen counter-claimed that his phone was being tapped.

Then came the sex. This week the Hebrew press has reported that Rabbi Lau has made sexual advances against several women — which he has denied.

"It's more like a U.S. presidential race than an election for the Chief Rabbinate," says Shalom Ilan, a writer on religious affairs for Ha'aretz newspaper. "It's a tragedy-comedy, says Menachem Friedman, a sociologist and author of books on the institution. He and others have been predicting the decline and fall of the Chief Rabbinate for several years. Now, they believe it is inevitable.

When the Chief Rabbinate was founded in 1921 its purpose was to define the nature of Jewish citizenship, in Mandatory Palestine, before the state was founded, and to make learned interpretations of Jewish law. It is a Zionist body, funded by the state. As such it is largely spurned by anti-Zionist, ultra-Orthodox religious groups. It makes rulings, for example, on who can be defined as a Jew and supervises the kosher food laws.

Over the years the broad role of the Chief Rabbinate as prime arbiter of Jewish law — Halacha — has become largely symbolic, and cannot be enforced according to Professor Friedman. In a mainly secular society Israelis may prefer to listen to their own rabbis. And the Chief Rabbinate has no power outside Israel. As a

result the prestige and learning of the Chief Rabbis have declined. But in one vital area the institution is all-powerful. The two Chief Rabbis are judge and jury in Israel's marriage and divorce courts. It is here that the Israeli state and the Jewish religion are intertwined. While many secular Jews have objected, religious Jews in Israel have always insisted that religious control must be exercised over marriage and divorce to preserve the unity and purity of the Jewish people.

Religious experts say they believe that when the new Chief Rabbis are finally chosen they will have far less status than their predecessors and eventually the institution will be dismantled. But rabbinical control over marriage and divorce is likely to remain — The Jerusalem Post.

Sudanese rebels rob U.N. workers

NAIROBI (AP) — Southern Sudan rebels robbed three U.N. workers and two airplane crew members when they landed in a town hit by famine and disease, the United Nations said Saturday.

Brenda Barton, a U.N. spokeswoman in Nairobi, said no one was injured and the aircraft was not damaged in the assault Friday.

"They took all their personal belongings and some medicine," Ms. Barton said of the rebels.

She said the flight was authorised a week ago by the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRRA), the humanitarian wing of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) faction loyal to John Garang.

"Apparently the town changed hands without SRRRA knowing," Ms. Barton said.

She said about 200 armed men, who had mounted anti-aircraft guns around the runway, surrounded the Cessna 200 when it landed from the northwestern Kenya border town of Lokochog.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Association said Saturday the Nasir faction of Riek Machar carried out the robbery.

But John Luke, a spokesman for the breakaway faction, denied his group was responsible.

"We have no forces there. They are just trying to create the impression we are hindering relief," Mr. Luke said.

Ms. Barton said the U.N. staff had gone to check on health and food requirements for the people, mostly members of the Dinka tribe.

As many as a million people have died due to war and famine and six million forced to flee their homes since the civil war started nearly 10 years.

The rebels took arms in 1983 to press for increased autonomy for the African and predominantly animist and Christian south, traditionally dominated by the Muslim north.

Ms. Barton said there were no plans for the U.N. to halt its missions to southern Sudan because of the incident.

British support for Rushdie will harm ties, IRNA says

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's official news agency IRNA has warned that new meetings between British officials and author Salman Rushdie would further harm relations between London and Tehran.

Indian-born British author Rushdie has lived in hiding since Iran issued a death warrant against him in 1989 saying he blasphemed Islam in his book "The Satanic Verses."

IRNA made its comments Saturday night on the fourth anniversary of the order issued by Iran's late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The news agency said a meeting last week between Mr. Rushdie and British Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg in London "is bound to affect the prospect of relations between Britain and Iran."

It was Mr. Rushdie's first public meeting with a British minister in four years.

IRNA described Mr. Rushdie's visits abroad and recent interviews as "yet another futile bid to avert the inevitable" and reiterated Iran's stand that the death sentence was "binding and irrevocable."

Mr. Rushdie, 45, who has spent four years under 24-hour police protection moving from

one secret location to another, pledged after meeting Mr. Hogg to step up his own public appearances and trips abroad.

In the first year he has visited nine countries seeking international support and denouncing what he called "Iran's state terrorism."

The British government recently said the death order was an obstacle to closer relations with Iran, such as upgrading ties to ambassadorial level.

"Whatever short-term political benefits London's vain support for Rushdie may have for that country, in the long run... Britain will be more and more exposed as an anti-Islamic and hostile country to world Muslims," IRNA said.

"British statesmen should have long realised that the late imam's decree on Rushdie being an apostate is not revocable and is still valid," it said.

"As for the apostate himself, he is nothing more than a political card for his supposed backers in their propaganda campaign against Iran and Islam and one day will be discarded."

In its apparent new approach, the British government has effectively reversed two key aspects of its policy on Mr. Rushdie and Iran.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Egypt urges Israel to halt violence

CAIRO (R) — Egypt urged Israel to stop blowing up Palestinians' homes in the Gaza Strip as part of a campaign to root out suspected fugitives. Egypt, the only Arab country to have signed a peace treaty with Israel, said it viewed with concern Israeli forces' use of anti-tank rockets and explosives to demolish the houses. "Egypt does not accept such unjustified escalation against civilians... such acts are a flagrant violation of the Geneva convention and all international laws and norms," said a Foreign Ministry statement published in local newspapers Sunday. "Such acts constitute a real obstacle to the peace process," the statement added. The Israeli army fired rockets at 20 Palestinian homes in the Gaza Strip Thursday in what it described as an operation to capture wanted activists. "Egypt calls on the Israeli government to halt these acts, comply with legitimate rules, apply the law and ensure security for the Palestinian people in the occupied territories," he said.

France offers Algeria \$1.07b in credits

ALGIERS (R) — France has offered Algeria six billion francs (\$1.07 billion) in credits for 1993, visiting Finance Minister Michel Sapin said Saturday. Mr. Sapin told reporters that five billion francs (\$890 million) would be in the form of commercial credits, the same amount as the French government lent in 1992. The remaining one billion francs (\$180 million) "is at exceptional financial conditions and with absolutely no strings attached," Mr. Sapin said after signing the credit agreements with Ahmad Benbitour, the junior minister economy and treasury. The credits are of enormous importance to Algeria, which will have to spend \$9 billion this year servicing a foreign debt of about \$26 billion. Export earnings will be only \$11 billion. The Algerian government has indicated it will need some \$2 billion from the international community this year to close its external financing gap. France, which ruled Algeria for more than 100 years up to 1962, had already promised to help Algeria economically but it

was not clear until now how large the credits would be. The two ministers also signed an agreement on the protection of French investments in Algeria. Mr. Sapin said France agreed to help Algeria in its talks with international financial organisations "so that the dialogue will be fruitful and that all the difficulties and special characteristics of the Algerian economic situation should be taken into account."

U.S. warns against travel in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (R) — The State Department Saturday warned Americans against travel in Afghanistan, saying Westerners there are vulnerable to robbery, kidnapping and hostage-taking for political and criminal purposes. Afghanistan's guerrillas and government troops were locked in a fierce battle near the capital Kabul Saturday in their 26th day of fighting for political control. The United States has had no diplomatic mission in Kabul since 1988.

Kazakh president meets Mubarak

CAIRO (R) — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev held talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Sunday and signed an agreement for bilateral cooperation. Egyptian officials hope the new accord will stimulate trade with the huge oil-rich republic in Central Asia. The two leaders discussed "the need to maintain stability, curb the spread of violence and extremism and preserve the real spirit of religion and its positive influence on society," the sources said. Egypt, witnessing a rising tide of Muslim fundamentalism, is also interested in containing Iranian influence in Muslim Central Asia. It has honoured scholars from the area and offered to set up religious and educational services. Mr. Nazarbayev arrived Saturday. He is the fourth president from a former Soviet republic to visit Cairo since the republics became independent just over a year ago. Egypt had extensive trade with the former Soviet Union and has managed to maintain trade worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) through constant high-level contacts between officials and businessmen.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Petit Dejeuner Complet
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine Sportif
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Step by Step
21:10 Martin Bay
22:00 News in English
22:30 Jordan Weekly
22:40 Vietnam

PRAYER TIMES

04:57 Fajr
18:15 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:50 Dhur
14:56 'Asr
17:25 Maghrib
18:43 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetfield, Tel. 810740
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 627785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440
De la Salette Church Tel. 601757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623441

Anglican Church Tel. 652026, Tel. 625453

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

American International Church Tel. 685326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624326

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623624, 654952

Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cold and partly cloudy and winds will be northerly moderate.

In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 2/7

Desert 3/13

Jordan Valley 8/15

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 5, Aqaba 17 Humidity readings: Amman 61 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Jamal Al Ja'fari 796460

Dr. Mohammad Al Ghoud 790730

Dr. Mohammad Al Nahawi 693025

Dr. Khalid Mu'addi 743590

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 773336

Al Asma pharmacy 637055

Natroukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salem pharmacy 636720

Vacouch pharmacy 649465

Shurouk pharmacy 637660

Natroukh pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Rescue 620341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 821111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Iraqi dinar plunges after CBJ warning

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Iraqi dinar took a plunge in the local market Sunday in the wake of a Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) warning that speculators were behind the dramatic boost Saturday in the exchange rate of the beleaguered Iraqi currency.

The Iraqi dinar was being traded at around 50 to 55 fils Sunday, down from 100 fils at closing Saturday, dealers said.

The climbdown followed a statement issued by CBJ Governor Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi late Saturday.

"There is no change in the status of the Iraqi dinar," said the statement, adding that "speculation" was behind the sudden rise in the exchange value of the dinar.

The statement said the Central Bank would soon adopt "strict measures against speculators" and to "protect the interests of the public and the Jordanian and Iraqi economies."

"The CBJ warning — without directly intervening in the market — appeared to have worked well to disperse the frenzy for Iraqi dinars," said Qasem Al Muzari, manager of the main branch of Cairo-Amman Bank.

Several other banking officials agreed with the view, and particularly noted that the CBJ warning against speculation appeared to have been taken seriously by those concerned.

Banking circles and dealers agreed

that there was little doubt that currency speculators had built up the atmosphere leading up to Saturday's frenzy over Iraqi dinars.

Enlisting the willing on unwinding support of unlicensed moneychangers, the masterminds behind the scam used the weekend to spread rumours that it was only a matter of weeks before the United Nations Security Council would relax if not lift the international sanctions against Iraq.

The calm reported in the military front coupled with obvious Iraqi political overtures to Washington appeared to have fuelled the speculation, drawing in hundreds to scramble for the Iraqi currency.

The payoff came Saturday, when the Iraqi dinar shot up to 100 fils in the market, up from around 40 fils Wednesday, before slumping back to 50 to 55 fils Sunday.

Bankers and moneychangers expected the currency to fall further to 40 to 45 fils Monday.

"Ordinary people were the major victims of the scam," said Marwan Al Alami, head of the Alami Exchange House, a licensed moneychanger. "I have been advising clients not to invest in the Iraqi currency, but it seems that many were ensnared in the game."

"I am willing to bet that almost every household in Amman was engaged in yesterday's frantic search for Iraqi dinars," he said.

Several dealers reported that many Jordanians had sold their dollar holdings to buy Iraqi

dinars in Saturday's frenzy with hopes of high returns.

"Black market dealers and their masters took the cream of the profits," said a dealer. "They stage-managed the scheme very carefully and unloaded their Iraqi dinars into the market at more than double the prices they paid for the currency in the past weeks and months."

Mr. Alami, whose firm was offering 55 fils to the dinar at midday Sunday, underlined the superficiality of the exchange rates of the dinar in Iraq and Jordan, the only country where the Iraqi dinar is freely exchanged.

"At today's rate in Jordan, one could buy up to 11 or 12 Iraqi dinars to the dollar," he noted. "In Baghdad, the dollar fetches not less than 30 dinars."

"The entire exchange system for the Iraqi dinar is crooked," he added.

Mr. Alami said he believed that it would take "many years" before the Iraqi currency could regain any semblance of its pre-crisis value; it was sold four to five to the American dollar in the black market prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

The officially set exchange rate remained the same at \$3.1 to every Iraqi dinar.

"Even if the U.N. were to lift the sanctions tomorrow, I don't think the Iraqi dinar could regain its value," said Mr. Alami. "Iraq needs billions and billions of dollars to stabilise itself and it would be many years before it can achieve stability."

Talal Fareed, manager of the main branch of the Jordan National Bank in Amman, said commercial banks had little to do with the upheavals in the Iraqi currency.

"Unlicensed moneychangers dealing among themselves and streetwise exchangers were behind the unreasonable rise and fall of the Iraqi dinar," he told the Jordan Times.

The regional manager of an international bank in Amman agreed.

"The only explanation is that speculators who were marking time with huge amounts of hoarded Iraqi dinars cashed in and moved out with a fat profit," said the banker, whose bank, like most other Jordanian banks, stopped all dealings in the Iraqi currency immediately after the Gulf crisis erupted in August 1990.

The exchange value of the dinar in the Iraqi market hovered between 30 and 35 to the dollar in recent weeks while the rate in Jordan slowly recovered after taking a plunge during last month's military confrontation between Baghdad and the U.S.-led anti-Gulf coalition over implementation of Gulf ceasefire terms.

Bankers in Jordan are warning of two distinct pitfalls for holders of Iraqi currency: forgeries and uncertain prospects for banknotes printed by the Iraqi government in the wake of the Gulf crisis.

"There is no way of telling what percentage of the dinars now in the hands of Jordanians is fake," said a chief dealer at one of Jordan's leading commercial banks.

The official noted that there was a

large amount of forged Iraqi dinars in circulation in Iraq as well as outside, in addition to two types of legal currency: the first is nicknamed "European" and the other "askari" (military).

The term "European" stands for Iraqi notes printed in Europe and in circulation prior to the Gulf crisis and "askari" denotes those printed by the Iraqi government when faced with a shortage of currency and refusal by Britain to release banknotes printed under contract with Baghdad.

"Askari" notes fetch 20 to 25 per cent less than the value of "European" notes.

The Iraqi government has accused the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iran of printing and distributing hundreds of millions of Iraqi dinars in forged currency in a bid to further undermine the country's economy.

It was difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy the volume of the Iraqi currency that changed hands in Saturday's hectic trading in the Jordanian market.

But exchangers and banking officials have said that several hundred million Iraqi dinars were in the hands of speculators in Jordan alone.

In addition, some banking officials say the billions of Iraqi dinars ("European") that were transferred to speculators in the Gulf states, notably Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in the past two years appears to be slowly making their way back to Jordan after the Kuwait central bank banned all deal-

ings in the Iraqi currency three months ago.

According to the international banker as well as other banking circles, hoarders of Iraqi currency run the risk of losing all such holdings if the Iraqi government were to declare the "askari" notes null and void at any given point in time.

On the other hand, some observers recall that the Iraqi government had faced a similar situation in 1976 but opted to continue to honour locally printed banknotes even after finding itself under heavy pressure to withdraw them.

They also note that President Saddam Hussein, although not holding presidency, was effectively in control of running the country during that crisis.

"Iraq has an excellent track record of honouring its own currency under all circumstances," said an observer. "It is a matter of national pride for the Iraqis which will not easily be sacrificed by the Baathist regime in Baghdad."

Reports from Baghdad said Sunday that prices were falling in the Iraqi market against rumours that the sanctions were to be lifted soon.

"Iraq's economy, battered with 30 months of a blanket embargo, reacts quickly to rumours and news that Baghdad is looking for an accommodation with U.S. President Bill Clinton," said a Baghdad trader quoted by Reuters.

Sharif Zeid discusses ties with visiting N. Korean team

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker met Sunday with a visiting North Korean delegation and expressed appreciation of North Korea's aid in support of Palestinian and Arab causes.

Sharif Zeid said the North Korean parliamentary delegation's visit is expected to strengthen relations and cooperation between Jordan and North Korea.

Head of the delegation Yang Sop expressed his satisfaction with the development of relations between his country and Jordan and voiced North Korea's support for the Palestinian people and support for solutions to international conflicts through dialogue based on justice.

Following the meeting with the prime minister, Mr. Hyong Sop and his delegation met with Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber to review Middle East and world affairs. Mr. Hyong Sop and Dr. Abu Jaber called for the establishment of Middle East peace based on U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Sop and his delegation called at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) and were briefed by its president, Dr. Kamel Ajlouni, on the university's programmes and activities.

Dr. Ajlouni discussed with the visitors the prospect of launching educational cooperation with Korean universities. He also accompanied the parliamentary delegation on a tour of the campus.

Brucellosis workshop to form regional plan

AMMAN (Petra) — A four-day regional workshop opened Sunday in Amman to coordinate efforts of seven Middle East countries in combating brucellosis, a disease caused by the bacteria affecting especially cattle and causing undulant fever in humans.

Welcoming the delegates from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Oman and Turkey, Minister of Agriculture Khasawneh said the workshop is designed to produce an integrated programme that will benefit the participating nations.

J.N. Resident Representative Jordan Omar Hashem addressed the opening session and outlined the importance of the meeting in finding ways to protect human health as well.

U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) representatives discussed and a report on combating brucellosis in a number of countries.

He said that in light of the workshop's findings, efforts will be made for international financing of resultant projects.

Several working papers will be reviewed including statistics of brucellosis cases in each country, achievements in combating the disease and proposed programmes for collective work.

According to Dr. Khasawneh, recent surveys in Jordan showed a decline in the rate of brucella infection, but he said there is still a need for a regional plan to deal with the problem.

He added that since the mid-1980s the Ministry of Agriculture took measures against brucellosis through vaccines in cooperation with international organisations.

Dr. Khasawneh said the ministry had also started producing brucella vaccines.

The four-day workshop is being organised by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the FAO and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Satellite channel goes on the air May 2

By Saad Silawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's satellite television channel will become formally operational on May 2, 1993, the 40th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers and Jordan Television's (JTV) 25th anniversary, according to Jordan Radio and Television Corporation Director Radi Alkhas.

Mr. Alkhas told the Jordan Times that experimental transmission through this channel started in February and viewers expressed satisfaction with the programmes, he said.

The new service will operate through channel 24 of ArabSat, the Arab satellite, which is financed by Arab countries.

Viewer feedback from Saudi Arabia, the Gulf region and other Arab states is excellent, Mr. Alkhas reported.

He said the experimental telecasts included news programmes in Arabic, French and English, in addition to other local programmes.

Mr. Alkhas said that in preparation for the formal opening, the corporation has appointed correspondents for the channel in London, Bonn, Paris, Vienna, New York, Washington, Cairo, Tunis, and Rabat, adding that more



Radi Alkhas

correspondents will be added shortly.

To boost domestic telecasts a small television station located in Irbid has started broadcasting morning and evening programmes for the Irbid region only, Mr. Alkhas said.

He added that a television studio in Karak will be opened soon, and similar studios will be established in different governorates before the year's end.

Mr. Alkhas said the corporation is also establishing an agricultural television station in the Jordan Valley in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, to provide guidance and extension services to farmers.

Jordan to head Arab sports panel

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan was chosen to head an Arab sports committee charged with drafting a future working plan for sports activities and events in the Arab World, Minister of Youth Saleh Irshaidat said Saturday.

Dr. Irshaidat, who participated in a recent meeting of the Arab Youth and Sports Council in Beirut said the Arab youth ministers decided that Jordan would host the Arab-African youth camp next summer.

Dr. Irshaidat said the council has established a ministerial committee to follow up the reconstruction of sports facilities in Lebanon devastated by the civil war.

The committee will prepare a comprehensive study, including an estimate of the reconstruction costs, the minister said.

Jordan to begin first nursing programme for terminally ill

By Maha Adrees
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An agreement between the General Union for Voluntary Societies (GUVS) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was signed Sunday, to introduce a "model" community-based nursing programme to care for the terminally ill in Jordan.

The "Malath" programme, the first of its kind in Jordan, will consist of an interdisciplinary health care team of nurses trained in caring for the terminally ill, according to Joann Harrison, wife of the U.S. ambassador to Jordan, who played a leading role in the planning and establishment of the hospice programme.

"Previously, there has not been a health care resource in Jordan where patients and their families could seek support when curative care was no longer possible," Mrs. Harrison said. "So a group of concerned persons in the community recognised the need for such a programme," she said.

"The programme goals include keeping patients at home as long as possible, and helping them to live as fully as possible and at affordable costs. The programme also aims at educating health professionals and the general public, but most importantly it aims at supplementing and not duplicating existing services," Mrs. Harrison said.

According to a founding member of the Malath programme, Joan Mary Majali, services will be available 24 hours a day from the programme's office in Jabal Al Weibdeh.

The total cost of the program-

me is estimated at \$91,000 of which USAID will provide \$53,000 in technical assistance, initial equipment and supplies.

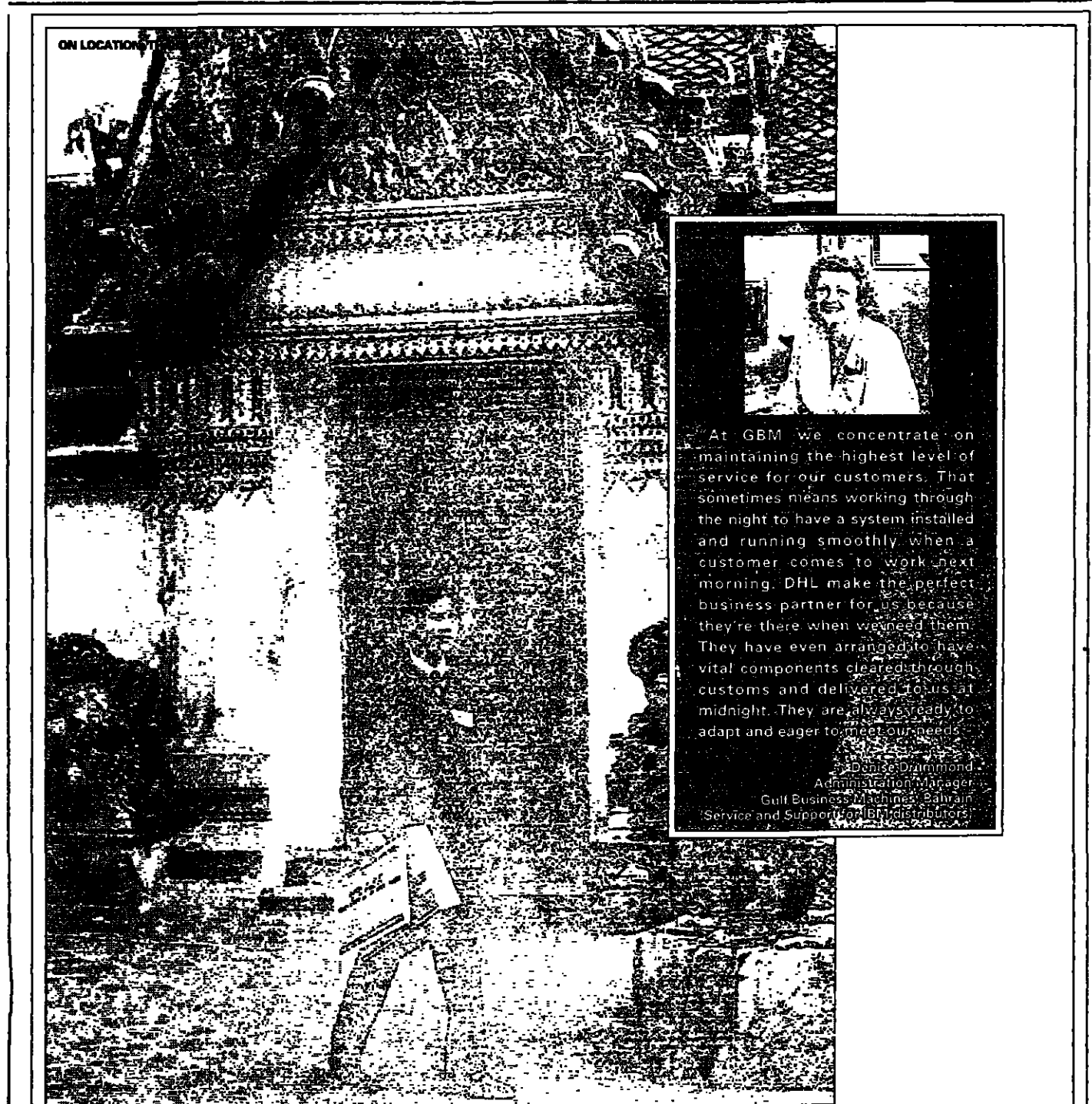
The remaining funds will be provided by GUVS.

It also stated that if the pilot project is successful, similar programmes will be established throughout the Kingdom by GUVS, and that a separate voluntary society is being established for this purpose.

Mrs. Harrison said it is important to incorporate such a programme to suit Jordan.

The hospice programme must be made "culturally acceptable for Arabs" and must be "cared for by Arabs in Jordan," she said.

The agreement was signed by President of GUVS Abdullah Khatib, U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Roger Harrison and USAID Director William Oliver.



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HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Prime minister visits PSD

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday stressed the importance of the public security forces in maintaining stability and security in Jordan. During a visit to the Public Security Department (PSD), Sharif Zeid called for intensifying efforts to improve the performance of the PSD forces at all levels. PSD Director Major-General Fadel Ali Fuheid said in an address delivered in the presence of Sharif Zeid the PSD exerts strenuous efforts to maintain national security. "The PSD us, to a great extent, succeeded in affecting positive changes in its structural systems and performance in a manner that suits the social changes witnessed in the country and the democratic experiment through which we are passing," Major-General Fuheid said.

Ramadan government hours announced

AMMAN (Petra) — Government office hours during the fasting month of Ramadan will be from 9.30 until 2.00, according to a communique issued by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker. He communique excluded staff of departments whose nature of work requires special administrative arrangements.

Irbid to attend Arabisation meeting in Bahrain

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in a conference on Arabising the Education of Medicine and Medical Sciences in the Arab World to be held in Bahrain Feb. 16. Health Minister Irfat Bataineh who will head the Jordanian delegation to the three-day conference said he will present several proposals dealing with writing medical books in Arabic and the establishment of a data library which would contain Arabic medical books.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.

Exhibition of watercolour paintings by Syrian artist Nazir Nab'a at Bahadun Art Gallery.

Exhibition of paintings by the late Syrian artist Alfred Hatmal at Al Balqa Art Gallery in Fuhais city.

Exhibition of paintings by four Arab artists from the United States — Ghada Jamal, Helen Khal, Saba Noursi and Afaf Zorayk — at the Abdel Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery in Jabel Amman, between the First and Second Circles.

Exhibition of photographs by Jean-Philippe Reverdot at the French Cultural Centre.

Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Hayat Jamil Hafiz at Alia Art Gallery.

FILMS

French film entitled "La Vie de Famille" at the French Cultural Centre at 8 p.m.

'Video of "Damn Yankees" at the American Centre at 5 p.m.

U.N. appoints new ESCWA head

AMMAN (J.T.) — United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has appointed Sabah Bakjaji as Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), at the level of Under-Secretary General.

Dr. Bakjaji was Syria's Minister of State for Planning in two successive cabinets, during the period 1985-1992.

He was a professor at Damascus University (1967-1972) and served two terms as Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, from 1973 to 1976 and again from 1981 to 1984.

In addition to his ministerial duties, he continued academic activities.

Dr. Bakjaji obtained the Doctorate D'Etat in statistical sciences in 1967 from Leuven (Lowain) Catholic University in Belgium, after obtaining a Licence in mathematical and physical sciences from Damascus University and a Licence in actuarial sciences also from Leuven.



Sabah Bakjaji

He has authored several works and conducted research in the economic and social fields, including transport economics, information and econometrics.

Dr. Bakjaji also prepared studies related to statistical analysis, re-insurance, actuarial mathematics, electronic data processing and operations research.

Born in Deir Az-Zawr, Syrian Arab Republic in 1930, Dr. Bakjaji is married and has three daughters and one son.

Jordan Caritas to attend regional meeting in Beirut

AMMAN (J.T.) — Representatives of Caritas organisations from Jordan and other North African and Middle East countries are opening a week-long meeting in Beirut Monday to discuss migration of Arab nationals to foreign countries and the adverse effect of such moves on socio-economic development.

Father Mousa Adeli who heads Jordan Caritas told the Jordan Times that the meeting will discuss ways to initiate socio-economic projects to help encourage people to remain in their own Arab region.

Caritas policy is to help the indigenous population to settle in

their own country and to discourage them from going abroad especially to the industrialised nations where there are complaints of high unemployment and economic recession. Father Adeli said.

The meeting will also be attended by organisations specialising in migration and providing assistance to Third World countries in order to boost their socio-economic development, he said.

Father Henry Boulad, president of the Near East and North Africa region will preside over the Beirut meetings.

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Inch closer to Black Sea

THE ONGOING visit of a high-level Jordanian delegation headed by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid to the new independent Islamic republics appears to be producing instant and positive results on the diplomatic and economic levels. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan have all agreed to forge closer relations with Jordan in the wake of His Majesty the King's decision to send the delegation there. Closer ties with those countries could be translated into not only warmer political relations but also cultural and economic as well.

Many states from various regions of the world are rushing to establish contacts with the new independent Islamic countries in the wake of the collapse of former Soviet Union, since most of the Islamic tier in former U.S.S.R. are rich in resources and well endowed with yet unexplored wealth and economic potential. But what binds Jordan with these countries and their peoples goes beyond trade and commerce. Being Islamic, we share with them and the rest of the Arab World common religion and culture, on the basis of which stronger relationships can be forged. In due course, many Arab and Islamic embassies will be opened in these countries to give expression to the newly-initiated contacts.

Jordan no doubt will be among those countries that would pioneer this trend. Given the warm and friendly receptions accorded our delegation, in Baku, Tashkent and Bishkek, we can expect reciprocal visits from the governments of the three states to Jordan in the near future. This is a time for getting acquainted with the unique opportunities that the Islamic countries in the Black Sea region can offer and an occasion to establish new bridges with them. As those Muslim countries had lived under the heavy shadow of U.S.S.R. for a long time contacts between them and the rest of the Islamic and Arab worlds were indeed difficult and remained at a low level. Now that they are free and breathing freely away from the domination of Moscow, however, they can be expected to highlight their own identities and open the road for stronger ties with the rest of the international community on the basis of their unique circumstances and background. Jordan therefore has done well to take the initiative in starting relations with them. And we hope the step can be followed up in a manner which serves the mutual interests of all sides.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE U.N. Security Council has washed its hands of Resolution 799, concerning the repatriation of the deported Palestinians, by declaring that the U.S.-Israeli compromise of returning 100 of the expelled men only was sufficient and a step in the right direction, said Al Rai Arabic daily Sunday. In fact, such a declaration constituted a way of escaping from the duty of implementing the resolution and tricking the world community into believing that the Israelis were indeed implementing the resolution while in reality they are not, said the paper. It is also strange to hear the Arab League secretary general issuing a statement accepting the compromise at a time when the evictees' issue is far from being resolved, the daily added. Indeed, the U.N. announcement that it accepts the compromise represents a defeat for the United Nations Organisation and its Charter and provides another evidence that the Security Council has been transformed into another tool in the hand of the United States State Department, the paper continued. The ignominious behaviour of the U.N. Security Council vis-a-vis Resolution 799 sets a very dangerous precedent that could be repeated with resolutions 242 and 338, the paper warned. It said that now, in the light of this development, Israel is expected to conclude another compromise formula with the U.S. administration concerning the other council resolutions, rendering them void of any substance and inapplicable. In the light of these developments, the paper added, it would not look strange to the world if the Israelis and the Americans concluded another formula, paving the way for a perpetuated Israeli occupation of Arab lands.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab daily discussed the plight of the Iraqi people under the sanctions which are taking the lives of hundreds of thousands of women and children every year. Sameh Hamandeh said that shortages of drugs and food have taken their toll among the civilian population while the U.S.-led aggression on Iraq provide evidence of the magnitude of the crime being committed by the American and Zionist alliance against the Arab Nation and against humanity at large, the writer noted. He said that while none of the U.N. resolutions concerning Palestine has been implemented, the Security Council, which is under constant U.S. influence, continues to impose the unjust sanctions that have wasted innocent lives. The killing of women and children through starvation and deprivation of the basic needs of lives constitutes a shameful crime serving as a stigma in the history of mankind, the writer added. He said that the Arab countries, which hold the power to terminate the sanctions and rescue the endangered lives of the Iraqi people, ought to take the first step to abort the U.S.-Zionist aggression on the Arab Nation.

Weekly Political Pulse

Commission on freedom, democracy and human rights — what is missing?

The country took another giant step in the direction of building on His Majesty King Hussein's proposal last year to establish a centre on freedom, democracy and human rights in the Arab World when His Majesty named the 20-member commission charged with the task of translating this ambitious idea into practice. Presumably, the first agenda item will be the enactment of a law on the establishment of such a centre on the basis of which it will be structured and start functioning.

It is puzzling, however, that the ministries of Justice, Interior and Foreign Affairs were not included in the commission. After all, it is the Ministry of Justice that will have to spearhead the legislative effort aimed at filling in the gaps in existing Jordanian laws touching on these domains. The Ministry of Interior is the most concerned with the application of the process of democratisation in the Kingdom and there is no excuse to keep it out of the endeavours of the commission. As for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is the most acquainted with Jordan's treaty obligations in the realm of human rights. To exclude it from the works of the commission is to deprive the commission of very valuable and basic information on where the country stands on the various international human rights instruments.

Since the commission is established by a Royal decree, it is for all intents and purposes a governmental agency. The exclusion of basic ministries from its membership is untenable and needs to be rectified.

The time will also come when the composition of the board of trustees to govern the centre and articulate its regional policies will have to be expanded to comprise eminent personalities from other parts of the Arab World. As long as the scope of the centre

is regional, it is just not possible to formulate guidelines on freedom, democracy and human rights on the basis of the experiences of Jordanian nationals alone, no matter how well they may be versed or interested in civil and political rights embracing contemporary norms and standards on human rights.

The international dimension is also woefully lacking in the composition of the national commission entrusted with the obligation of founding the suggested centre, physically and figuratively. Since Jordan and the Arab World cannot be expected to examine such important and pressing issues as freedom, democracy and human rights in isolation from the international scene, it would have been advisable to include people who are well-versed in the U.N. and other international organisations on human rights in order to make available the jurisprudence of several international bodies on human rights and related issues to the members of the commission.

Since there is also a fine line that separates human rights from humanitarian law, greater efforts should have been exerted to include people who are also aware of such humanitarian subjects in the context of the broader topic of democracy, freedom and human rights. Against this backdrop, one cannot think of a better or more capable personality to head the newly created commission than His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan who is not only well-acquainted with all the issues that the proposed centre will address but also fully cognisant of the many international dimensions of these subjects. In retrospect, the national commission created for this purpose should be renamed as the Royal Commission under the honorary chairmanship of Prince Hassan

and composed of people from other parts of the Arab World as well as people acquainted with the centre's international dimension. Otherwise, the entire exercise will remain provincial, drawing only on the unique national experiences gathered from the Jordanian scene.

It would be presumptuous to assume that any of the people who are manning the commission can speak for the issues of democracy and human rights in the entire Arab World. Many Arab states have their own special problems, interpretations and experiences Jordan can draw on as well for developing further the Jordanian democratic process. Clearly no Arab state has a monopoly on what is right and what is wrong when it comes to the quest for democracy and human rights. It would be prudent, therefore, to address this deficiency as soon as possible.

In due course, the Jordanian commission will have to establish bridges with other existing Arab committees dealing with human rights, whether on the national or regional basis. There are several such Arab institutions that have already made considerable headway in the promotion and protection of human rights. In this vein, the existing Arab institutions are both governmental and non-governmental. A decision would also have to be made whether, in the final analysis, the Jordanian commission for the examination of freedom, democracy and human rights is going to function as a governmental organisation or as an NGO.

To be sure, there are other related issues that need to be ironed out in the future. The most constructive approach is to hold a regional conference on this subject before any additional steps are taken in this regard.

Coalition armies widen role in Somalia

By Christopher Burns
The Associated Press

GAILALASSI, Somalia — The U.S. led military mission to halt clan warfare and get aid to the needy has unofficially widened its role to include such tasks as rebuilding houses, digging wells and creating police forces.

Officials call it "mission creep." Italy's 187th Parachute Regiment came to Gailalassi in December on a mission to stop clan fighters and bandits from looting relief shipments intended for starving people.

This week they were laying bricks and hammering tiles on the roofs of damaged houses. They already had rebuilt the hospital and fixed a well.

In Mogadishu, a 3,000-member police force is being set up by coalition forces to assume traffic control and monitor feeding centres.

"When you're on a mission, you always want to move forward, not backward. You look for things to do," said Col. Fred Peck, the U.S. forces spokesman.

But Col. Peck warned there have to be limits or the foreign troops might get "mired deeper" than intended.

The United States wants to pull most of its remaining 19,000 troops out as soon as possible and turn the mission over to a U.N. force. The Security Council is expected to debate approval of

the new Somalia operation soon. Whoever agrees to carry on the effort, reconstruction and social services will be key to keeping the peace and keeping famine at bay.

Those measures are called for in a U.N. study prepared for a March 9 donors' conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In Gailalassi, a town of 8,000 people, 160 kilometres north of the capital, Italian troops initially confiscated weapons and patrolled the area while the Save The Children relief agency handed out food.

Col. Tiziano Nizzoli, the civilian liaison officer, said some Somalis were wounded in gunbattles with the troops, who suffered no casualties.

When the threat decreased, the Italians turned to non military projects such as fixing and rebuilding schools and hospitals.

Col. Nizzoli is helping provide veterinary care for livestock, organising trash collection and even a mail service via Italy. About 60 Somalis work for him and get paid with food.

He wants to persuade Italian businesses to return to Somalia, which Italy ruled as colony or protectorate for nearly 80 years until independence in 1960. Many of the local Somalis speak Italian.

"I don't need an interpreter. That makes it a lot easier to find out what they need," said Col. Nizzoli, known to town children as "capitano biscotti" or captain

cookie, because of his sweet handouts.

Somalis interviewed in the town said there was no resentment over Italian colonial rule. Though some accused Italy of siding with Mohammed Siad Barre before the dictator fled the country in January 1991.

Ensuing clan warfare left Somalia devastated and famine-stricken, leading to the allied intervention in December.

With more than 3,000 troops in Somalia, Italy has the second-largest force in the multinational coalition after the United States. Aid officials said they were welcome in Gailalassi.

"They know this place, and because of the common language, no one was killed when the Italians took over the area," said Ali Hajj Shrivra, assistant director of Save The Children in Gailalassi.

Gailalassi and the rest of the country still requires huge amounts of aid.

Dr. Vincenzo Oddo of SOS Cooperazione, an Italian relief agency, pointed to flapping tarps instead of glass panes in the windows of one ward at the hospital.

"We need chairs, tables and windows," he said.

Italian patrols are still seizing weapons, and because of persistent banditry further north, the army planned to move its base to Bula Burd, 50 kilometres away.

Intellectual property laws key to tech transfer, investment

By Rosalind Mandine Murphy
WASHINGTON —

Developing countries can encourage foreign investment and the transfer of technology by establishing laws protecting intellectual and industrial property rights and strictly enforcing these laws, according to two U.S. experts.

Harold Wegner, director of the Intellectual Property Law Programme at George Washington University's Law Centre, and Timothy Trainer, a senior attorney with the U.S. Customs Service, discussed the protection of intellectual property rights during a Feb. 9 Worldnet Symposium television programme with participants in Amman, Beirut and Cairo.

Asked about the transfer of technology from industrialised to developing countries, Mr. Wegner said this transfer is wholly dependent on providing effective protection of the technology.

While many companies in industrialised states "would like the opportunity" to develop their businesses in the Middle East, they must first "make sure their technology is secure," Mr. Wegner explained.

To this end, issuing patents and establishing effective patent laws "are the best way of protecting technology," he said. Once these laws are established, their strict enforcement is a necessary step to

encouraging investment and technology transfer, Mr. Wegner said.

Educating the business community to the legal problems involved in copyright, patent and trademark infringement will also contribute to a healthy investment environment, he added.

Mr. Wegner advised developing countries to join the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), established by the United Nations World Intellectual Property Organisation. By doing so, the United Nations will handle the administration of patent granting procedures and allow developing countries to save on the cost of establishing their own patent offices, he said. Fifty-five countries are now members of the PCT, he said.

In addition, developing countries can and should seek cooperation from the three major patent offices in the world, located in Munich, Tokyo and Washington, D.C., Mr. Wegner suggested. "I am sure the U.S. patent office will be very pleased to cooperate with your country," he said.

The U.S. Customs Service "does work with the other governments to establish enforcement measures" of copyright and trademark laws, Tim Trainer noted. Customs Service representatives often travel abroad to

inform officials of other countries about U.S. customs laws and procedures, he said.

The U.S. Customs Service is presently "working closely with the Customs Cooperation Council in Brussels and talking with many countries" about developing an international computerised database to exchange information on trademarks and copyrights, Mr. Trainer noted.

Commenting on the future of international agreements on intellectual property rights, Mr. Wegner criticised the failure of agreement in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks last year, saying it was "a very sad event." The failure of the talks will lead to a "more ad hoc and bilateral" approach to discussions and agreements on intellectual property rights, he said.

Mr. Trainer said that while the GATT talks failed to produce agreement, the talks did provide "basic groundwork in the future" for intellectual property rights agreement.

"A lot of good things came out of the discussions," he said. "Even if there is no agreement, the talks 'can be applied to bilateral agreements.'" — United States Information Agency.

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King meets with committee on Amman centre

(Continued from page 1)

id our forefathers at the beginning of this century when their nation faced a period of challenge, ingratitudes and oppression. It is therefore imperative that membership in the centre be open to all free Arabs in the same way that the honour of joining the Great Arab Revolt was available to all free and noble Arabs springing to the unity and glory of their nation. Only this way will our centre be a haven sought by those who believe in human rights, freedom and democracy around the globe, those who have suffered the pain of incarceration and abuse, those who have patiently weathered indignity in their search for a world ennobled by freedom, justice and human dignity.

"The defence of people's freedoms, bolstered by cooperation with Arab and international organisations of a similar bent, requires a strengthening of budding democratic practices in the Arab lands which may choose to adopt this approach. This is because the role of the centre is to instill the concept of freedom in those who suffer from oppression. It lies in exposing the evil of despotism and in inculcating patterns of thought based on a free, modern and rational discourse rooted in our nation's true traditions and in the most radiant manifestations of its benevolent message. It also lies in achieving a profound understanding of the contemporary world, and of the current change that requires comprehension of today's forces in order to expand the scope of freedom and progress worldwide, and in order to study the prerequisites for the achievement of balance between knowledge, power and wealth as

these changes are being made."

"In order for poets to express themselves freely, in a secure environment unmarked by oppression or individual tyranny — an environment in which children can sleep in peace and comfort, without being terrorised by fear, subjugation, or a sense of siege — we must stand up to illiteracy, hunger, disease, fear, tyranny, plunder, alienation, religious and sectarian extremism, and any other form of assault on man's freedom, rights and dignity."

"We are strengthened by our tradition of facing poverty with pride, our kin's injustices with fortitude, and ignorance with knowledge. The enlightened Jordanian vision and our commitment towards the Arabs have served as beacons at a time that has been the collapse of the fearful and the desertion of the hesitant. Jordan has remained a shining light guiding those who seek freedom. It has retained its unified spirit, with a clear vision and a dignified reputation. It is a rich depository of martyrs and innovators, and a true example of serene fortitude, self-abnegation, and opposition to tyranny and oppression. Let this centre, therefore, be the bridge that revives our links with the era of Al Hussein Ben Ali and of Abdul Rahman Al Kawakibi. Let it reemphasise the human values of freedom and noble-mindedness, the creative pursuits of writing and clear-headed awareness. Let it point out the dangers of oppression, disarray, civil wars, plunder or national resources, absence of vision, narrow-mindedness and immorality. Let the torches of freedom, fuelled by the light of our consciences, be enshrined in

our children's textbooks and in the lecture-halls of our universities. Let it be protected by the zeal of our soldiers. Let the dream of freedom from oppression and the attainment of the Arab individual's rights be a prelude to future unity, or at least, let it sustain the dream of unity in our hearts from the agony of its rejuvenation, the struggles of its intellectuals and the democracy of its regions to declare its freedom, its unity and its great universal presence."

Director of the centre Najib Al Rashdan thanked the King on behalf of the founding committee for his confidence in them and pledged to exert every sincere effort to turn the centre into a beacon for right, freedom, democracy and human rights in the Arab World.

"While implementing the Royal Decree, we pledge to exert our utmost and sincere efforts to turn this centre into a beacon of brilliance for legitimacy, freedom, democracy and human rights in our Arab World, guided by your Majesty's wisdom and directives," Mr. Rashdan said.

He said the King had launched "the march of freedom, democracy and human rights in Jordan, by announcing the establishment of this centre to enable the march to succeed and to turn it into a daily way of life for individuals and communities."

"Experiences of the Arab World during this century and the challenges facing it, have shown that had Arab countries adopted freedom, democracy and recognition of human rights as an approach, the objectives of the Great Arab Revolt in freedom and unity would have been achieved and the barriers imposed by the imperialist would have been removed long time ago," Mr. Rashdan said.

Foreign minister under criticism

(Continued from page 1)

the House with the names of citizens who have received assistance from the National Aid Fund.

Mr. Ekour, who had asked for the names in a letter he sent to the minister, said he would request an official questioning of the minister ahead of withholding confidence from him if the list is not made available to the House within a week.

In his response to the deputy, Mr. Mashaqbeh, who is recovering from surgery and did not attend the session, said it would

be improper to reveal the names of the fund's beneficiaries, but said any deputy or official authority can review them at the ministry.

Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Kabarti responded on behalf of the social development minister and said he has a list of the names which he will provide to the House.

During its two-hour session, the House also endorsed the decision of its Administrative Committee to refer some citizens' complaints to the government.

Saddam urges dialogue with Clinton

(Continued from page 1)

"I simply believe that we can pave the way for building new relations based on mutual respect and legitimate interests regardless of what has happened."

Mr. Clark, who also had talks with Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz and Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf during his visit to Baghdad, was not available to comment on his meeting with President Saddam.

Mr. Clark, a leading U.S. anti-war activist, served the Johnson administration as attorney general from 1967-68. He opposed the

Vietnam war, the Gulf war, and U.S. military actions against Panama, Grenada and Libya.

He denounced the bombing raids ordered on Iraq last month to enforce "no-fly zones" over northern and southern Iraq. A factory and hotel in Baghdad were also struck by U.S. cruise missiles in an attack on what Washington said was an Iraqi nuclear weapons facility.

Mr. Clark told reporters before the meeting that the best way to start a new U.S. relationship with Iraq would be to ease the United Nations sanctions.

Rabin expects Palestinians at talks

(Continued from page 1)

visited Syria said Sunday that Damascus sees no link between the repatriation of evictees and the resumption of the peace talks. Sen. Arlen Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican, stopped in Egypt on the last leg of a Middle East tour that included visits to Syria, Jordan and Israel. Republican senators Hank Brown from Colorado and James M. Jeffords from Vermont accompanied him.

The senators held talks with President Hosni Mubarak on the peace process.

"The problem with the deportees is obviously a problem but even in Syria we were told that there is no linkage between the deportees and the peace talks," Mr. Specter told reporters.

"The deportation issue has to be dealt with but I think the Syrians are interested in moving ahead," he added.

Syria, like all Arab countries involved in the peace process, has insisted that Israel return all the evictees before returning to the negotiating table.

Shaban Omran, a Syrian assistant secretary general of the Arab League, said Sunday that the Security Council compromise on the return of the evictees was not enough and Israel should take them all back as soon as possible.

Militants attack Algerian schoolbus

(Continued from page 1)

Four policemen died Saturday, gunned down in the Algiers suburb of Al Harrach less than 24 hours after the authorities announced they had executed four fundamentalists.

Gendarmes headquarters said soldiers Saturday killed three fundamentalists near Bounouh Tizi, 48 kilometres south of the capital. Another had been killed shortly before, it said in a statement.

"The attack on Nezzar, the deaths on Saturday and now the bus incident, plus the executions announced by the authorities show a growing hard line by both sides," a Western diplomat said. More than 250 members of the security forces have died in ambushes or clashes with fundamentalists since a state of emergency was imposed in February last year during political upheaval.

The state of emergency, extended indefinitely last week, was decreed after violence erupted when the army-backed authorities in January 1992 cancelled a general election dominated by the now-outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

Military courts have condemned 48 men to death in the past

year for violence. Six men, including two members of the military, have now been put to death in a month — the first such execution for decades.

The gendarmes said the children on the minibus attacked on Saturday were being taken to a primary school from outside the town of Reghaia, 40 kilometres east of Algiers.

"The driver...was seriously wounded by three terrorists armed with a submachinegun and two automatic pistols," it said several hours before announcing that he had died. The attackers fled in a car.

Fundamentalists have been blamed for killing 41 civilians, including parents of security force members. But there have been no previous attacks directly involving children.

Commenting on the attack on Nezzar, the newspaper Al Watan, usually well-informed on security matters, said government members and other state officials were now living in a "protected zone."

A diplomat commented: "The attempt to kill him seemed to show good intelligence about his movements, a fairly sophisticated operation, with an equally sophisticated bomb."

Israelis kill youth near Nablus

(Continued from page 1)

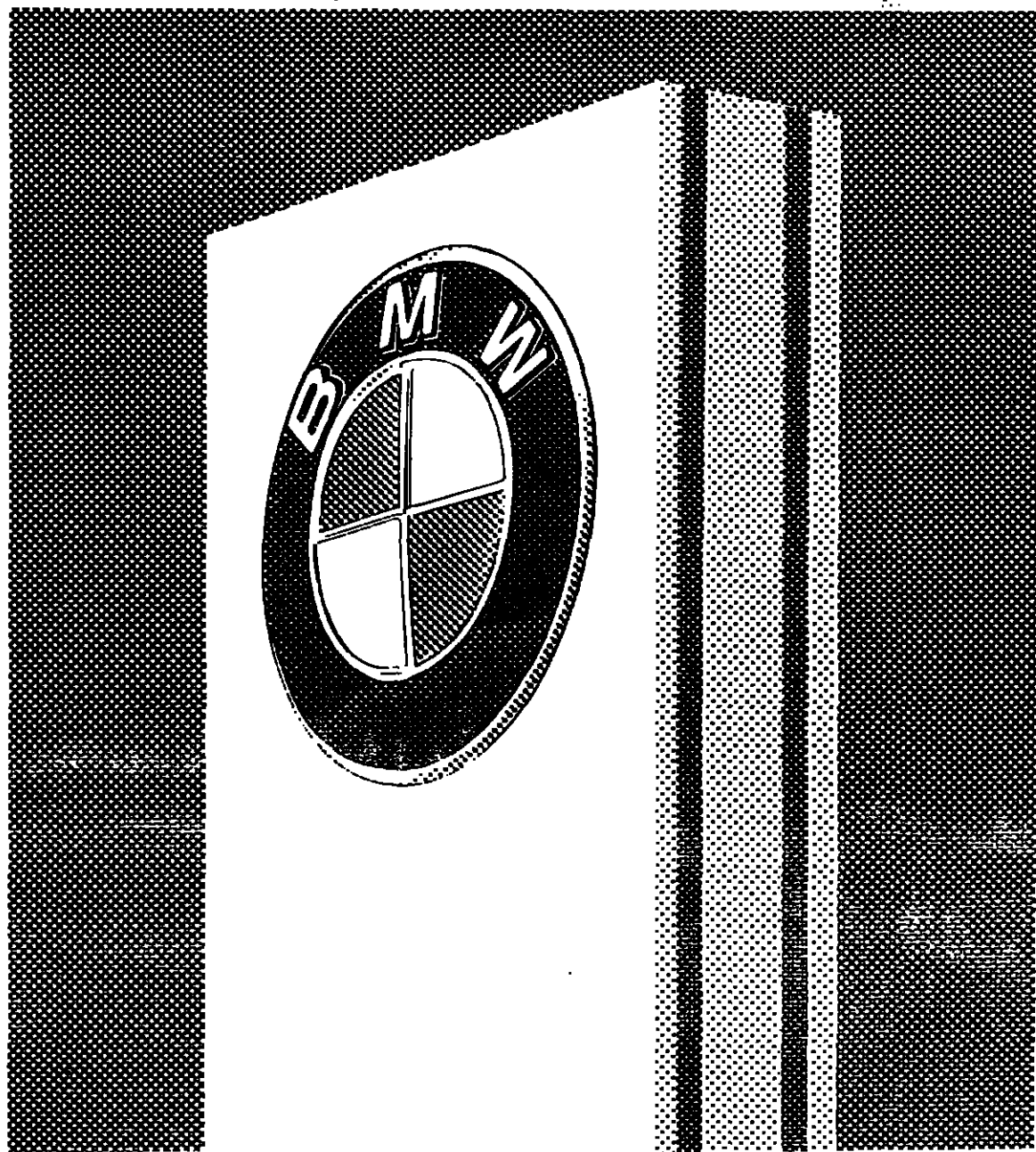
A Foreign Ministry spokesman meanwhile said Egypt rejects Israel's unjustified escalation of violence in the occupied territories.

He said the use by Israeli forces of anti-tank rockets and explosives to destroy houses in Gaza represents a flagrant violation of the Geneva agreement and other international accords. "Such practices constitute a genuine obstacle to peace," the spokesman, Naji Al Ghatreify said.

The Arab League is scheduled to meet next Tuesday to consider the Israeli measures against the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Esmat Abdul Meguid, secretary general of the 21-member group, told reporters Saturday the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) requested the meeting after Israeli occupation forces cracked down harshly on Palestinians in recent weeks.

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Kuwait plans spending cut to tackle deficit

U.S. and Japanese economic fundamentals are stable, Mr. Hayashi said.

Convoy leaves for eastern Bosnia

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — A convoy carrying food and medicine headed Sunday to a desperate and isolated eastern Bosnian town. Sarajevo continued to boycott aid to protest the east's plight.

U.N. officials, facing mounting hostility from residents and city leaders in Sarajevo, said they hoped to begin medical evacuations from the besieged city soon.

Distribution centres in the capital remained quiet on the third day of what city authorities say is a hunger strike in solidarity with thousands of people trapped for months in eastern Bosnia by Serb sieges.

The city council, backed by the Muslim-led government, announced Friday it would stop distributing the food aid that has kept Sarajevo residents alive during a 10-month siege. The council said it would resume distribution only after convoys reach Slavic Muslims and others in eastern Bosnia.

Fighting and Serbs — sometimes soldiers, sometimes unarmed civilians — have blocked U.N. convoys from reaching several towns in eastern Bosnia for months.

Early Sunday, trucks loaded with food and medicine left the Yugoslav capital, Belgrade, for Cerska, isolated since the war began last spring.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees office in Belgrade said the convoy had reached the Serb-held eastern Bosnian town of Zvornik and was headed for Cerska.

Bosnian government radio said Saturday that 166 people have starved recently in Cerska. But government reports of mass starvation have been disputed by U.N. officials in the past.

Serb fighters recently allowed some 6,000 Muslims to flee the Cerska area for nearby Muslim-held Tuzla, where relief agencies said many arrived in terrible condition, with disease and frostbite.

Tuzla, 80 kilometres north of Sarajevo, declared Saturday it

would join the capital's fast and refuse more aid until those trapped by fighting are fed.

UNHCR envoy Jose-Maria Mendiluce headed to the Serb stronghold of Pale, just east of Sarajevo, for talks about getting more convoys to eastern Bosnia, said Karin Landgren, a Swede taking over UNHCR's Sarajevo operations.

Ms. Landgren said there are 2,300 tonnes of food and medical supplies in warehouses in Sarajevo and at the airport.

"The warehouses are 65 per cent full," she said. U.N. officials have said stockpiled food may spoil.

Ms. Landgren reported plans for medical evacuations from the city, where some wounded have waited for months without proper treatment or artificial limbs.

"A doctor is coming in next week to review who needs to go, and get it started," she said.

Meanwhile, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic has warned his troops to stay out of politics.

"It would be the greatest tragedy if soldiers came to power," he told Sarajevo Television Saturday night.

Kemal Mufic, an adviser to Mr. Izetbegovic, said the president was responding to complaints from some members of Bosnia's forces that the government was not doing enough to provide them with arms and ammunition in their fight against rebel Serbs.

Mr. Mufic said there was no threat of a coup against Mr. Izetbegovic.

The president, asked by an interviewer whether the army was changing its political attitudes, said troops should stick to the task of ending the siege of Sarajevo and resisting Serbs in other parts of Bosnia.

"The more a soldier is politicized, the less he is a soldier," Mr. Izetbegovic said.

He said his government would continue to take account of the views of ordinary soldiers because they were "the same thing



A boy warms his hand and tries to heat some food on a rubbish fire at a Sarajevo market after the city rejected all aid until relief convoys get through to eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP photo)

as the armed people."

But the government had never allowed the military to impose its views and Bosnia would remain democratic, he said.

In Vatican City, Pope John Paul II appealed again Sunday for peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, asking political leaders there to make every effort to end the violence and allow humanitarian aid to reach the needy.

The Pontiff told about 10,000 people gathered in St. Peter's Square that the situation in the Balkans "becomes more tragic and cruel every day."

"I invite yet again all the be-

lievers to ask God with me to give the gift of peace to the tortured population of Bosnia-Herzegovina and to guide the consciences of those who govern to make every effort to end the violence and permit humanitarian aid to reach its destination."

In a separate development, Croatian radio said Sunday that Serb forces in the rebel Krajina enclave shelled targets around the Adriatic port of Zadar overnight.

The area of Novigrad, Kasic and Maslenica was hit but there was no immediate word of casualties.

Moscow edges away from West

MOSCOW (R) — Moscow is edging away from its honeymoon with the powerful democracies of the West, nurturing instead the hopes of regaining superpower status which Russia itself has rejected since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Senior Russian officials have taken to making speeches with harsh criticism of the West. A new blueprint of Russia's foreign policy priorities names currying favour with the West as one of the main policy weaknesses of the recent past.

"We have been suffering from over-excitement with the abstract ideas of non-conflicting globalism," says the document, presented to parliament late last week.

"The time has come to take care of our national interests by using economic, diplomatic, military and other means."

The policy document represented a sharp change of outlook by the Foreign Ministry which drafted it.

Widely considered one of the most powerful bulwarks of liberalism in a fierce political power struggle with conservatives inside Russia, the Foreign Ministry has come under right-wing fire for its overtures to the West.

Last year Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev shocked a Euro-

pean security conference in Stockholm by saying Moscow could use military force and economic pressure to reassert Russian domination in the former Soviet Union.

Minutes later he said his speech was just a scare tactic designed to show what could happen if conservative opposition took over in Moscow.

But the draft foreign policy plan, designed on the same lines as the speech, does not seem part of a game.

"The creation of Russia's geopolitical environment is under way, with the outcome depending on our ability to reinstate international law and good neighbourliness through persuasion and in exceptional cases through the use of force," it says.

The Foreign Ministry echoed opposition claims, which it used to reject out of hand, that Russia should remain a dominant power in the former Soviet Union as well as in Eastern Europe.

"We cannot rule out the possibility of attempts by the United States to replace Russia in the zone of its traditional influence under the cover of mediatory or peacekeeping missions," says the document.

"Russia will oppose any attempts by third parties to build up a military and political pre-

sence in border countries...we also cannot allow the West to push Russia out of the East European region," it adds.

"There are few countries in the West which are interested in making Russia strong and united," Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told a meeting of local government leaders, shown by Russian Television Saturday.

On the same day Security Minister Viktor Baranikov accused Western secret services of cultivating a mafia trade in arms and narcotics to undermine Russia.

In a speech recalling declarations by Soviet officials before the failed hardline coup of 1991, he said Western intelligence agencies were helping Russian organized crime to forge links with international criminal organisations.

Presenting the new foreign policy guidelines in parliament Friday, Mr. Kozyrev, a co-author of Moscow's pro-Western policy, hinted at the increasing influence on President Boris Yeltsin by Russia's arch-conservative nationalist opposition.

Answering a deputy, who inquired whether his ministry was working under serious conservative pressure, he said: "In fact I don't know who is in opposition today."



In Brazil, carnival starts in the womb

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Even mothers-to-be are making sure their babies can dance samba at this year's Rio Carnival. As Brazil falls under the magic spell cast annually by carnival, organisers have set up a parade section where dozens of pregnant women can parade and dance in the city's world-famous celebrations. Globo Television reported. Expectant mothers even have a special school where they can learn moves for dancing to the samba, carnival's trademark music. Before joining the school or entering the parade, the women must undergo a medical examination, the television said. "This is too much fun, and I want to pass on all the happiness I feel to my son," said Ana Paula, a samba school dancer who is five months pregnant. Ceremonies marking the start of carnival — a pre-lenten explosion of dancing, drinking and revelry across Brazil — take place in Rio Thursday. The merry-making ends on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 24.

Valentine's Day prompts offbeat British endearments

LONDON (R) — Britons swapped romantic Valentine's Day endearments using a galaxy of offbeat nicknames such as "sugarcoated snuggleplum," "cuddiebumps" and "tubalub." The usually-revered British display their feelings on Valentine's Day, which falls on a Sunday this year, and anonymous public expressions of love abounded in the columns of national newspaper in advance of Feb. 14. Many were incomprehensible, with the code only obvious to the recipient, a few were worthy of the censor and others just old-fashioned proposals. Most drew heavily on the animal kingdom. "My darling gibbon, all my love snuggly rabbit," said one in the Times. "Mr. Andrew Cat, purr, purr, miaow, miaow. Lots of noserubs, Miss Judith Cat," was another message. Others were more specific. "Let's do the Kama Sutra together," was the invitation to tubalub from amorous H. Some were far from complimentary — "you smell like a cabbage and look like a leek."

Japan ex-premier gets surprise Valentine 'treat'

TOKYO (R) — Former Japanese Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita got a surprise Valentine's Day gift Sunday — chocolate bearing a message telling him to quit. Mr. Takeshita, under public pressure to resign for his role in a money-and-mobster scandal, is due to testify on the affair under oath in parliament this week. According to Kyodo News Agency, 12 women wearing the traditional garb of Japanese messengers gathered in front of Mr. Takeshita's residence and shouted: "We love Mr. Takeshita because he is candidly going to resign (from parliament)." The women then handed Mr. Takeshita's secretary a large heart-shaped box of chocolates bearing the boldly daubed message telling him to step down.

Ted Kennedy Jr. to wed psychiatrist

BOSTON (AP) — Edward M. Kennedy Jr., the son of the Massachusetts senator, will marry a psychiatrist who teaches at Yale University, the senator's office announced Saturday. Mr. Kennedy, 31, will marry Dr. Katherine Anne Gershman, said Melody Miller, a spokeswoman for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. They met three years ago at a chamber music recital at Yale. They were not willing to speak with reporters. Ms. Miller said. The wedding will be in the fall, although no date or location has been set, she said.

Gem dealer with royal links faces jail in Britain

LONDON (R) — Gem dealer Darius Guppy, a close friend of Princess Diana's brother, was found guilty of an insurance swindle and now faces a long jail term. Mr. Guppy acted as best man when Princess Diana's brother, Earl Spencer, married model Victoria Lockwood in 1989. Mr. Guppy and his business associate Benedict Marsh, both 28, were convicted of conspiracy charges involving fraud, theft and false accounting. They will be sentenced at a later date. Judge Andrew Brooks said: "I don't want you to leave the dock with any illusions. You are both going to prison for a very long time."

De Klerk: No fixed agreement with ANC

LONDON (R) — South African President F.W. de Klerk said Sunday his government had not entered into a fixed agreement with the African National Congress (ANC) on power-sharing.

Mr. De Klerk told a British television interviewer any final agreement on a new constitution must wait for multi-party talks, adding it was essential the Inkatha Freedom Party played a role in the negotiating process to avoid a break-up of the republic.

"We are going to have a few days of fundamental discussion with Inkatha next week. I think Inkatha must be brought into the negotiating process. I think it's fundamental."

"Otherwise we might be looking for trouble in South Africa. We don't want to go the Yugoslavian way."

On Friday the government and the ANC appeared to have reached agreement to defer majority rule until 1999, five years after elections late this year or early in 1994 for an interim government of national unity.

Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi warned Saturday of possible bloodshed if the South African government and the ANC tried to impose their constitutional plans for the country's future on the Zulu people.

Mr. De Klerk was at pains in the interview to remove the idea of a government/ANC deal.

"We are not making deals in our bilateral discussions at the moment," he told Sir David Frost. "The interpretation that we have entered into fixed agreements is wrong."

"We believe final agreement must be reached at a multi-party conference representative of all parties in the country. The focus is now on getting multi-party negotiations going again."

Mr. De Klerk said there was a convergence of views in the republic about the principle of devolution of "meaningful" power to regional governments. "By that time (the election) at least the borders of the regions must be in place," Mr. De Klerk said. "It is part of the growing consensus...regions must also elect regional representatives who will play a major role in the constitution-writing process."

He said there was no agreement yet about what percentage of the election vote parties must win before they could become part of a government of national unity.

"A form of proportionality might be part of the final solution," he said.

Mr. De Klerk said he did not want his successor as president to have as much power as he had, and raised the possibility of a rotating chairmanship of the cabinet.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Russian Communists try to regroup

SOROKINO, Russia (AP) — More than 1,000 Communists greeted the leaders of the failed 1991 hardline coup with a standing ovation at a meeting aimed at reviving the discredited Communist Party. "We have survived. Our president goes abroad and says that Communism is dead in Russia. But the Communist movement is becoming stronger," proclaimed Ivan Yakushin, a communal farm chairman. The stage was decorated with a white bust of Lenin. Despite the fanfare, the Communist Party is no longer regarded as a major political movement in Russia. The party's membership dwindled in the last years of Soviet power, and most Communist rallies in Moscow now draw fewer than 5,000 people. The Communists, mostly men in their 40s and 50s, gathered at the Klyazma Reservoir P. sort, several nondescript yellow brick buildings in a pine forest near the village of Sorokino, 15 kilometres north of Moscow. Anatoly Lukyanov, the former Soviet parliament leader who has been accused of taking part in the coup, told the crowd that Communism has a future in Russia.

Chinese police stop 69 'boat people'

HONG KONG (R) — Chinese police have seized a fishing boat carrying 69 people hoping to sail illegally to Australia, the Peking-controlled China News Service said. The would-be emigrants had each paid up to 4,000 yuan (\$700) to board the craft on the coast of the southern province of Guangxi, which was loaded with enough food for the trip and equipped with sophisticated navigational aids, the weekend report said. The ringleader of the group faced criminal charges, it said, describing the 69 as guilty of attempting to "leave the country illegally." Chinese citizens must have exit visas to travel abroad.

IRA shoots man in Belfast

BELFAST (R) — Gunmen of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) shot and injured a man outside a Belfast pub early Sunday, police said. The man was hit in the leg and the arm as he got out of a car outside the pub. His attackers fled in another car. The IRA, fighting to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, later claimed responsibility for the attack in a call to a local radio station.

'Soviets sank 2 nuclear ships in Baltic'

HAMBURG (AP) — The former Soviet Union disposed of two nuclear-powered ships by sinking them in the Baltic Sea, Der Spiegel news magazine said. It was unclear whether radioactivity was leaking from the vessels, the Hamburg-based magazine said in a summary of a report in its next issue, to be released Monday. Russian officials have gradually been releasing information on careless handling of nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union, including disposal of radioactive materials on land and in the Arctic Ocean. But Spiegel's report appeared to be the first on nuclear materials possibly sunk in the narrow Baltic, bordered by Poland, Germany and the Baltic and Scandinavian countries. Spiegel said the German government feared radioactive contamination could enter the food chain through fish in the Baltic. It said the sunken vessels were one civilian ship and one military ship.

Ghali due for Tokyo talks

TOKYO (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali arrives in Japan Monday to seek Tokyo's backing for his ideas on strengthening the world body and its global peacekeeping activities. For Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, Dr. Ghali's five-day visit offers a chance to advance Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council. Dr. Ghali is to meet Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa. Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe and Emperor Akihito as well as deliver three policy speeches and officially open the new headquarters of the United Nations University in Tokyo. As with his January trip to Germany, Dr. Ghali's visit to Japan takes place amid speculation that the world body will soon take steps to reflect an international power balance radically changed from the late 1940s when the U.N. was founded.

Evacuation near Philippine volcano begins

MABINIT, Philippines (R) — Troopers herded hundreds of Filipinos from their homes near Mount Mayon Sunday and loaded pigs and chickens onto trucks to clear villages threatened by the volcano's eruptions. Scientists kept a close watch while Mayon, which killed more than 60 people earlier this month, rumbled and spewed glowing rocks overnight after a series of moderate eruptions since Friday.

Craxi hints at juicy revelations

ROME (R) — Italy's former Socialist leader Bettino Craxi has hinted he will not hesitate to make potentially explosive disclosures in the battle to clear his name of corruption charges.

"I am going to have to reveal many things," he said. "I want all things Italian to be brought to justice."

Speaking to reporters over the weekend, former Prime Minister Craxi said he would continue to fight attempts to indict him.

He had been under intense pressure to resign since last December when he received the first official warning he was suspected of involvement in a huge bribery scandal.

But he made it clear he did not regard his resignation as an admission of guilt.

Political analysts have regarded him as doomed for the last three months. The question now, they believe, is how many people he will take down with him.

In particular, they wonder whether Mr. Craxi will make any damaging accusations which might jeopardise the shaky coalition of his fellow Socialist Prime Minister Giuliano Amato.

Mr. Craxi has always claimed the Socialists — main victims in the bribery scandal — were being unfairly singled out.

His former deputy Gianni De Michelis has said the scandal could just as easily have crippled the dominant Christian Democrats if it had broken out in their power base of Rome instead of the Socialists' stronghold of Milan.

Heckled at home for the embarrassing "camillagate" scandal, the British heir to the throne broke from his prepared speech in this southern colonial town in an ebullient show of joy at the thumping applause that greeted him.

"I'm very touched, if I might say so," Prince Charles said, soaking up the cheer from a 10,000-strong audience at the College of William and Mary.

"All I can say is that it's wonderful to come to Virginia and receive such an incredibly warm and encouraging welcome. Thank you very much indeed."

College officials said they could not recall any previous speaker receiving such an enthusiastic welcome.

It was the first U.S. test of Prince Charles' popularity since his December split from Princess Diana, the glamorous young wife

Lithuanians vote in presidential poll

VILNIUS, Lithuania (R) — Lithuanians trooped through thick snow to vote Sunday in a presidential contest which former Communist Algirdas Brazauskas is tipped to win against his emigre rival.

An opinion poll on the eve of the election showed Mr. Brazauskas, who advocates closer ties with Moscow to ease the country's growing economic crisis, winning 54 per cent.

His rival Stasys Lozoraitis, an emigre who became Lithuania's ambassador to Washington, appeared to be backed by about a third of the electorate.

Turnout in Lithuania's first direct presidential elections is expected to be high, with the latest opinion polls forecasting about 85 per cent of the electorate will vote.

Despite damp weather, hundreds of people in Vilnius walked through the morning darkness to cast their vote as soon as polling stations opened at 7 a.m. (0500 GMT).

For most voters, the key issue is the economy, Lithuania's entire industry had been built up on



Lithuanian Acting President Algirdas Brazauskas answers reporters questions 13 Feb. after the close of the presidential campaign in Lithuania. Brazauskas is one of two candidates for the post, elections for which are to be held Sunday (AFP photo)

cheap subsidised fuel from Russia.

Now, homes are without hot water and heating in flats and offices is low. Many factories have closed down or cut production, unable to bear the world market prices being demanded by Moscow for fuel.

Mr. Brazauskas, acting president since his Democratic Labour



Lithuanian Acting President Algirdas Brazauskas answers reporters questions 13 Feb. after the close of the presidential campaign in Lithuania. Brazauskas is one of two candidates for the post, elections for which are to be held Sunday (AFP photo)

Party won parliamentary elections in November, advocates a more cautious approach to reform than the man who led Lithuania to independence in 1991, Vytautas Landsbergis.

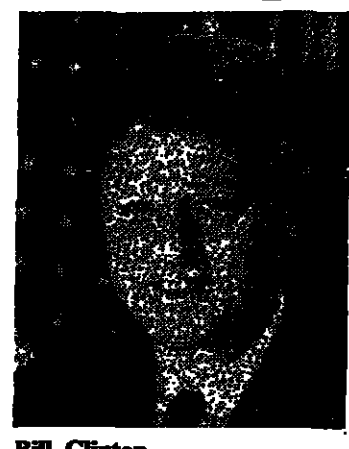
Mr. Landsbergis, his camp shaker by the November defeat, chose not to run in the presidential poll but he clearly retains political ambitions.

Clinton to cut costs on space station

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton will propose to slash \$2.2 billion from the space station program in the next fiscal year — the amount asked for by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Mr. Clinton, responding to the rumors, said he was a big backer of space programmes but there "may be some changes."

"I think you all know I've always been a big supporter of NASA and the space programme and the technologies it can repre-



Bill Clinton

But the New York Times Saturday quoted unnamed administration officials as saying Mr. Clinton's upcoming federal budget would propose spending \$2.2 billion on the space station in the next fiscal year — the amount asked for by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Mr. Clinton, responding to the rumors, said he was a big backer of space programmes but there "may be some changes."

"I think you all know I've always been a big supporter of NASA and the space programme and the technologies it can repre-

sent," Mr. Clinton told reporters who asked whether he would cut funding for the space station.

"I think the people who care about that (space programmes) will be pleased by the recommendations we make," the president said at the start of a meeting with congressmen.

"There may be some changes," he added without elaborating. Meanwhile, despite a government-wide effort to cut costs, a coalition of environmental groups urged President Clinton Saturday to spend more than \$1 billion to buy hundreds of private parcels of land for parks and recreation.

The Wilderness Society and 35 other groups warned that if the areas, totalling thousands of acres (hectares), aren't taken over by the government they could fall prey to development.

While the government needs to address the burgeoning budget deficit, the money needed to protect these sensitive lands is an investment "that will pay us and future generations back forever," Wilderness Society President George Frampton said.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt indicated last week that he wants to make expanding the national park system and rectifying its \$2 billion maintenance backlog a top priority.

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